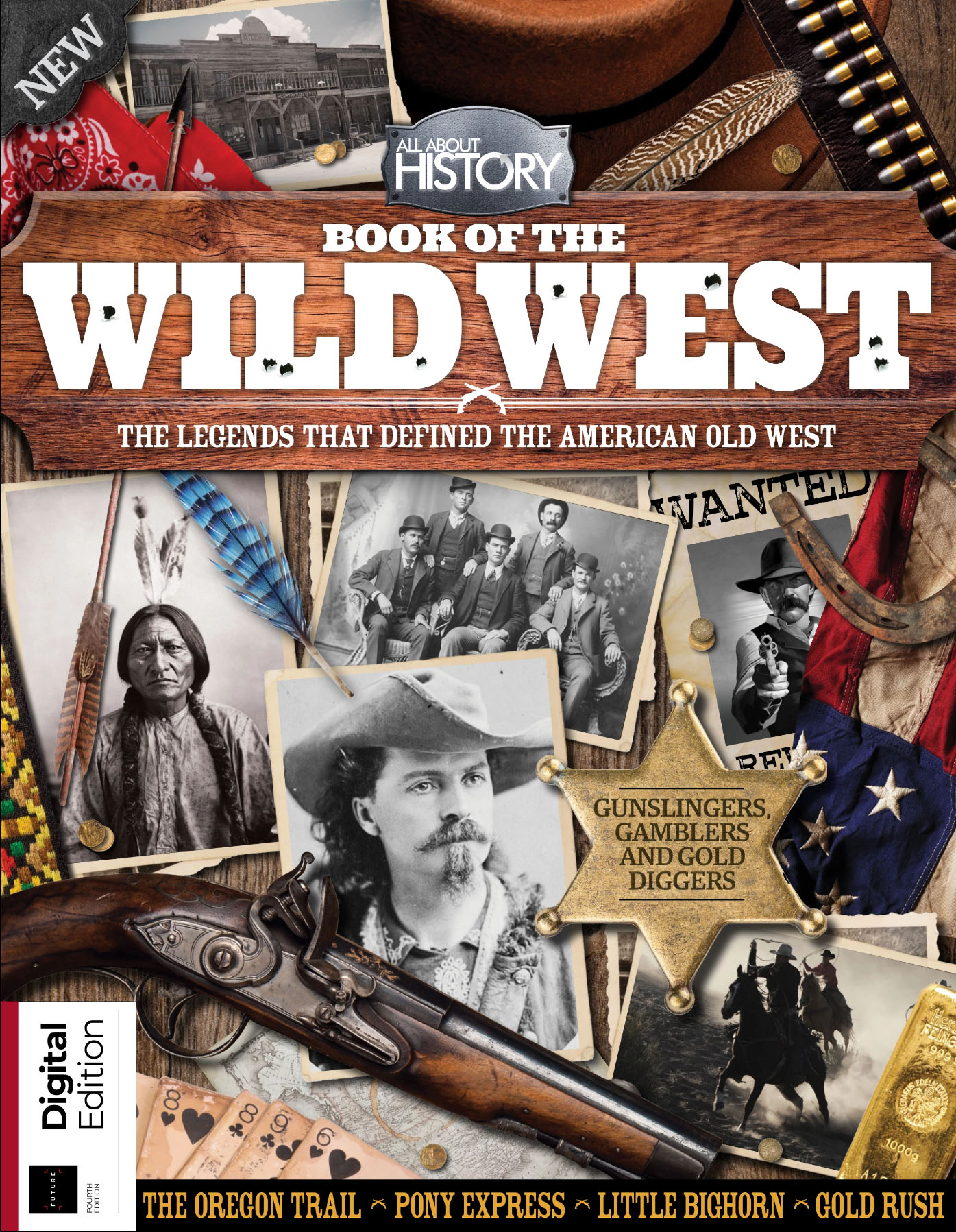


NEW

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

BOOK OF THE WILD WEST

THE LEGENDS THAT DEFINED THE AMERICAN OLD WEST

GUNSLINGERS, GAMBLERS AND GOLD DIGGERS

THE OREGON TRAIL ✕ PONY EXPRESS ✕ LITTLE BIGHORN ✕ GOLD RUSH

Digital Edition

FUTURE
FOURTH EDITION

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

BOOK OF THE
WILD WEST

The American Old West has been immortalised in countless Hollywood films, but what was life really like for settlers and Native Americans? Was it really as violent and dangerous as the movies make out?

The All About History Book of the Wild West separates fact from fiction, uncovering the fights for survival and the gruelling trials of the American frontier. Trace the adventures that took people beyond the edge of the map in search of gold, new land and trade goods, from the exploration of Lewis and Clark to the challenges settlers faced on the Oregon Trail. Find out why Jesse James and his infamous gang robbed banks and trains and committed murder, how he met his grisly end and why he became an American legend. Learn about Native American heroes, like Geronimo and Sitting Bull, who fought desperately to hold on to their ancestral lands in the face of unceasing encroachment from white settlers. Discover how the Battle of the Alamo helped shape a nation and why Custer's Last Stand at the Battle of Little Bighorn still resonates today. Packed with incredible images and insightful illustrations, this is the perfect companion for anyone wanting to discover the Wild West for themselves.

FUTURE

BOOK OF THE WILD WEST

Future PLC Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill,
Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ

Editorial
Editor **Hannah Westlake**
Designer **Madelene King**
Compiled by **Alice Barnes-Brown & Emma Birch**
Editorial Director **Jon White**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**

Cover images
Alamy, Thinkstock

Photography
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com

International
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely,**
Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman

Management
Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road,
Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

All About History Book of the Wild West Fourth Edition
© 2019 Future Publishing Limited

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill holds full FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification and accreditation

All contents © 2018 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

FUTURE

Connectors.
Creators.
Experience
Makers.

Future plc is a public
company quoted on the
London Stock Exchange
(symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Part of the
ALL ABOUT
HISTORY
bookazine series

CONTENTS

8 **How was the Wild West Won?**
Discover the wars, people and events that moved the American frontier westward

20 **Discovering the American West**
Lewis and Clark's dangerous journey into unknown terrain

26 **The Rocky Mountain Fur Company**
How fur trappers mapped the wilds of North America

30 **The Indian Removal Act**
How a forced exodus of Natives became known as the Trail of Tears

36 **Davy Crockett**
Was Davy Crockett really the king of the wild frontier?

40 **The Texas Revolution**
How Texas became an independent republic after a revolution

42 **The Battle of the Alamo**
The 13-day siege that killed all of the Texian defenders

46 **Riding the Oregon Trail**
How a spider's web of wagon trails opened up the west to settlement

50 **The Mexican-American War**
Tension between Mexico and America reach a crescendo

54 **The State Made of Gold**
How the accidental discovery of gold in California changed the state's landscape

60 **Last Orders at the Bar**
Step through the swinging doors of the Old West's watering holes

66 **The Pony Express**
Arduous, dangerous and vital to expanding the frontier

70 **How the Path to the West Led to War**
Would the new states be Slave States or Free States?

74 **The Apache Wars**
How the Apache tribes fought for freedom and their homeland

78 **Geronimo**
Learn about Geronimo's campaign for the Apache tribes

82 **Wild Bill Hickok**
How Wild Bill became an iconic hero in the Old West

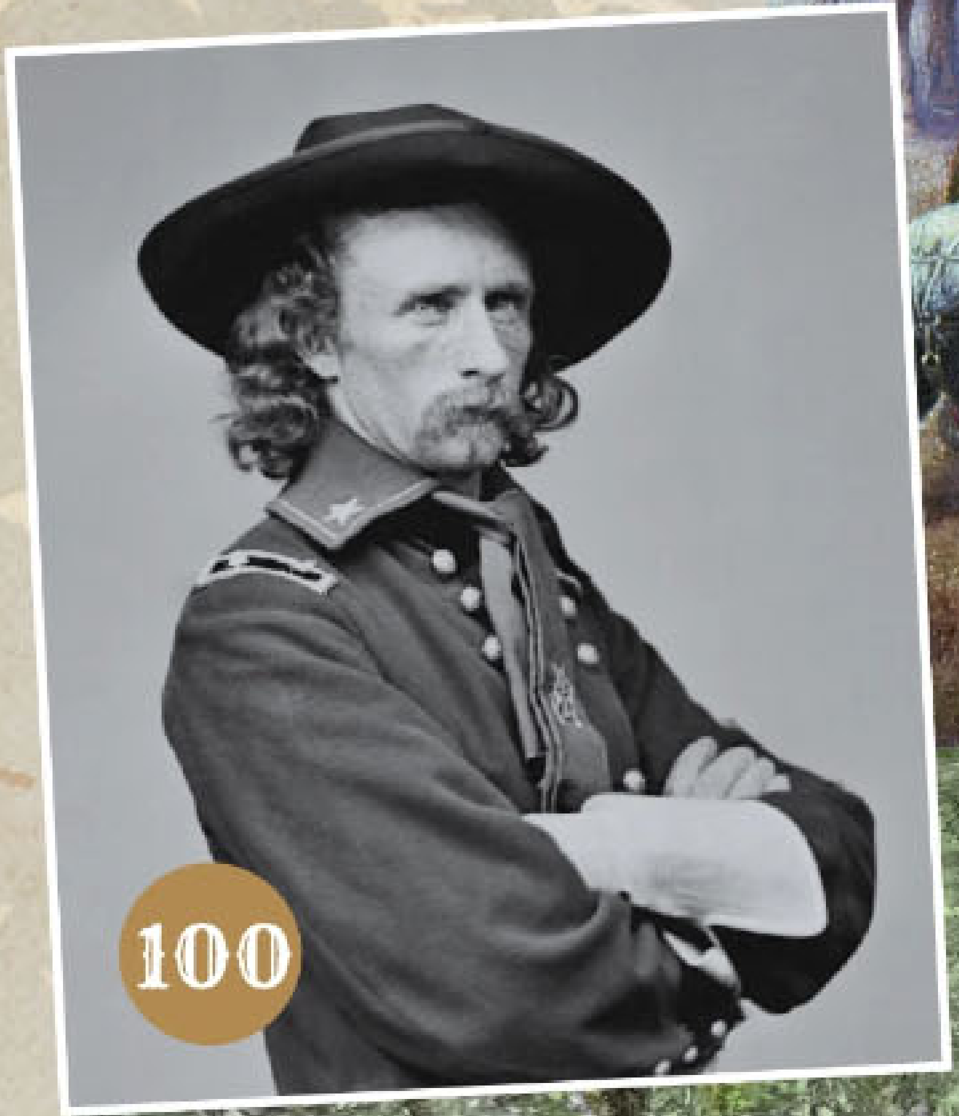
86 **Jesse James**
The Robin Hood of Missouri or a self-mythologising murderer?

90 **When the Buffalo Roamed**
The buffalo hunt was part business, part 'sport' and part military strategy

92 **The Great Sioux War**
Fighting for control of the Black Hills of South Dakota

96 **Sitting Bull**
The Sioux chief was determined to protect traditional ways of life

100 **The Battle of Little Bighorn**
Custer's fatal Last Stand against the united warriors of the Cheyenne, Arapaho and Sioux tribes



104 The Hunt for Billy the Kid
The real history of the hunt that made the lawman Pat Garrett

112 Wyatt Earp's Wild West
How Wyatt Earp took the law into his own hands

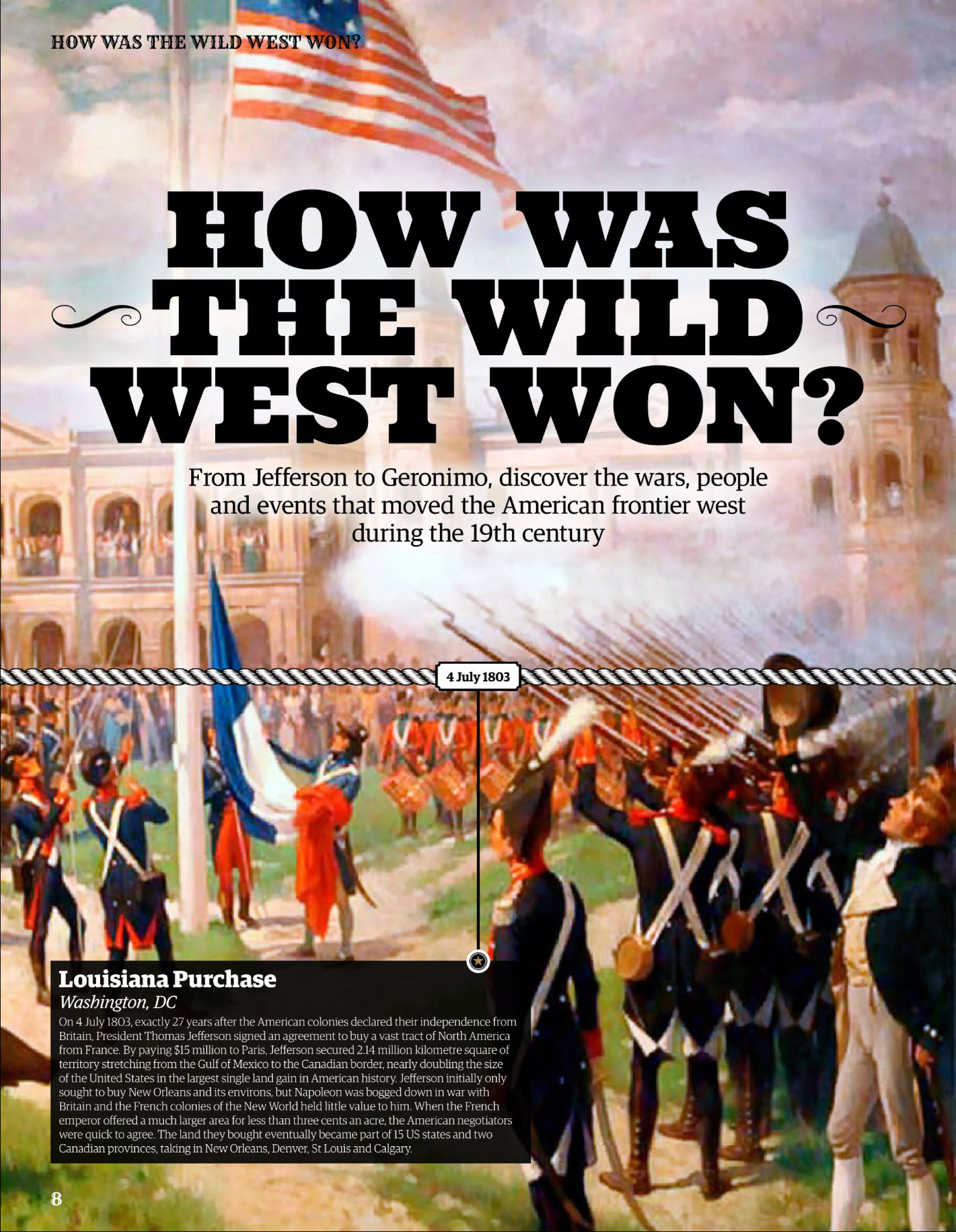
124 Buffalo Bill Cody
America's first great showman practically invented the "Wild West"

128 Wounded Knee
The horrific massacre of Sioux men, women and children

132 Butch Cassidy
Is Butch Cassidy the most infamous figure of the Wild West?

136 How to Rob a Train
How outlaws made their fortune

138 Closing the American Frontier
In 1890 the frontier was closed and the Wild West lost its wildness



HOW WAS THE WILD WEST WON?

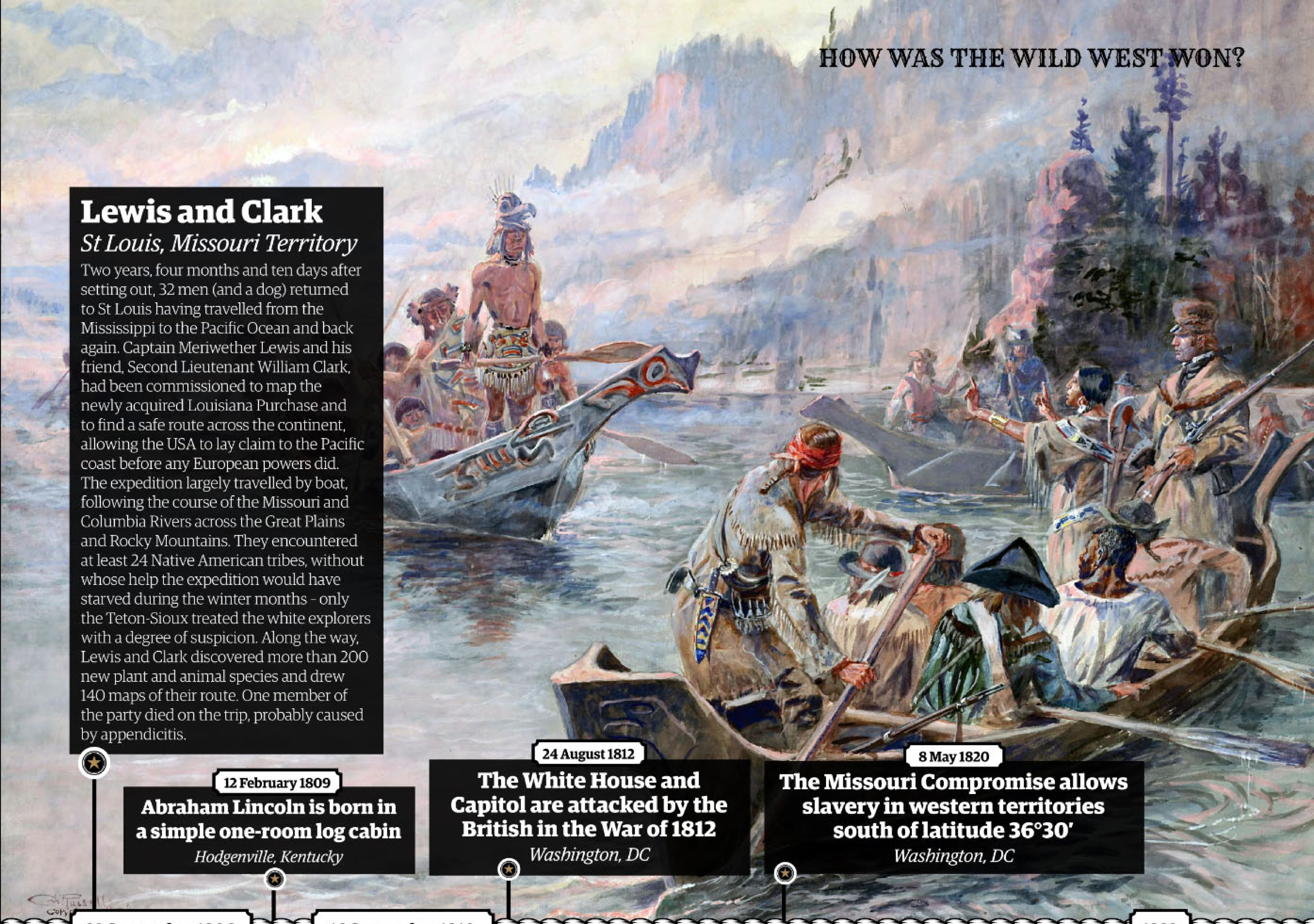
From Jefferson to Geronimo, discover the wars, people and events that moved the American frontier west during the 19th century

4 July 1803

Louisiana Purchase

Washington, DC

On 4 July 1803, exactly 27 years after the American colonies declared their independence from Britain, President Thomas Jefferson signed an agreement to buy a vast tract of North America from France. By paying $15 million to Paris, Jefferson secured 2.14 million kilometre square of territory stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border, nearly doubling the size of the United States in the largest single land gain in American history. Jefferson initially only sought to buy New Orleans and its environs, but Napoleon was bogged down in war with Britain and the French colonies of the New World held little value to him. When the French emperor offered a much larger area for less than three cents an acre, the American negotiators were quick to agree. The land they bought eventually became part of 15 US states and two Canadian provinces, taking in New Orleans, Denver, St Louis and Calgary.



23 September 1806

Lewis and Clark

St Louis, Missouri Territory

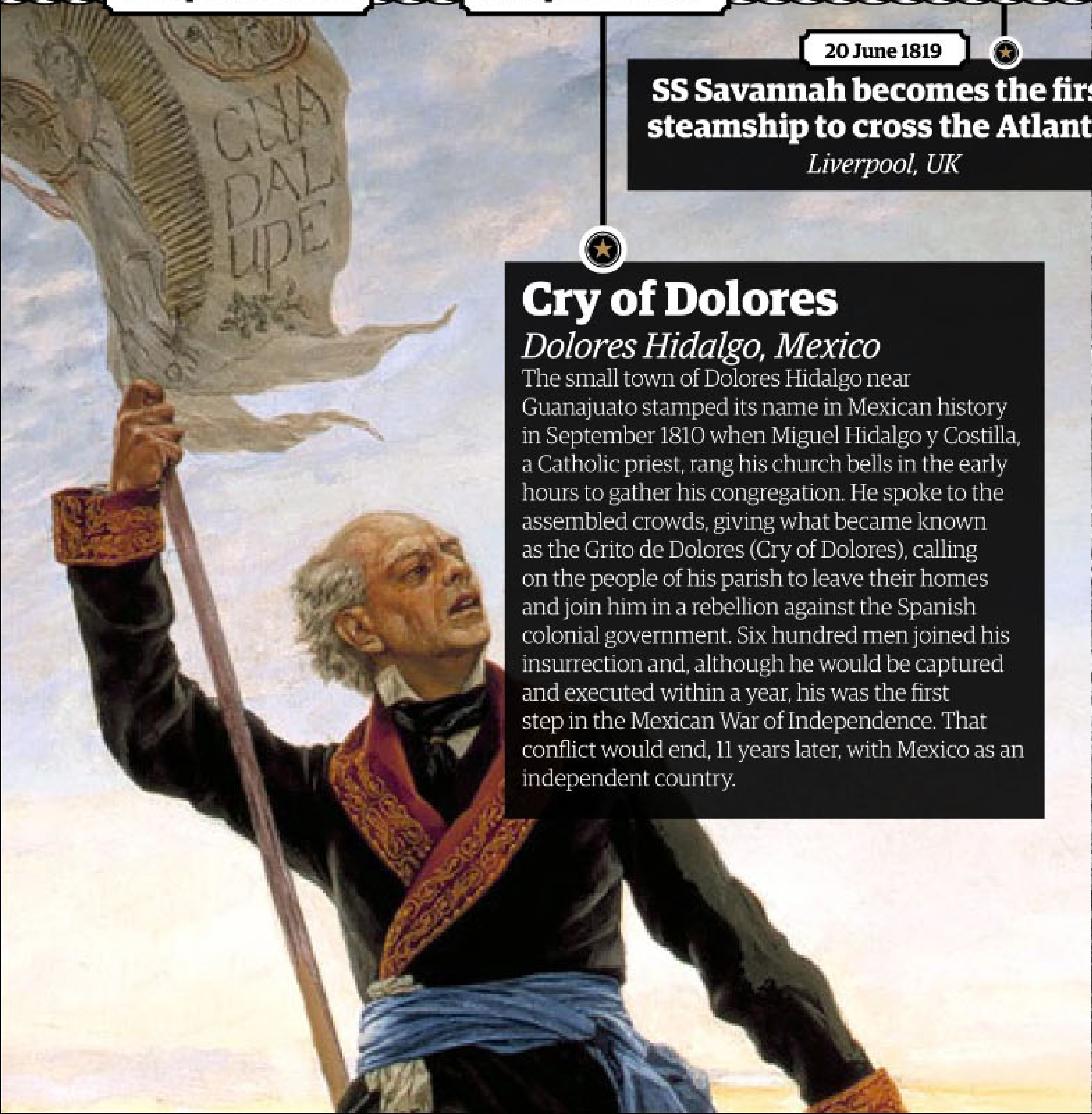
Two years, four months and ten days after setting out, 32 men (and a dog) returned to St Louis having travelled from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean and back again. Captain Meriwether Lewis and his friend, Second Lieutenant William Clark, had been commissioned to map the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase and to find a safe route across the continent, allowing the USA to lay claim to the Pacific coast before any European powers did. The expedition largely travelled by boat, following the course of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers across the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains. They encountered at least 24 Native American tribes, without whose help the expedition would have starved during the winter months - only the Teton-Sioux treated the white explorers with a degree of suspicion. Along the way, Lewis and Clark discovered more than 200 new plant and animal species and drew 140 maps of their route. One member of the party died on the trip, probably caused by appendicitis.

12 February 1809

Abraham Lincoln is born in a simple one-room log cabin

Hodgenville, Kentucky

16 September 1810



Cry of Dolores

Dolores Hidalgo, Mexico

The small town of Dolores Hidalgo near Guanajuato stamped its name in Mexican history in September 1810 when Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest, rang his church bells in the early hours to gather his congregation. He spoke to the assembled crowds, giving what became known as the Grito de Dolores (Cry of Dolores), calling on the people of his parish to leave their homes and join him in a rebellion against the Spanish colonial government. Six hundred men joined his insurrection and, although he would be captured and executed within a year, his was the first step in the Mexican War of Independence. That conflict would end, 11 years later, with Mexico as an independent country.

24 August 1812

The White House and Capitol are attacked by the British in the War of 1812

Washington, DC

20 June 1819

SS Savannah becomes the first steamship to cross the Atlantic

Liverpool, UK

8 May 1820

The Missouri Compromise allows slavery in western territories south of latitude 36°30'

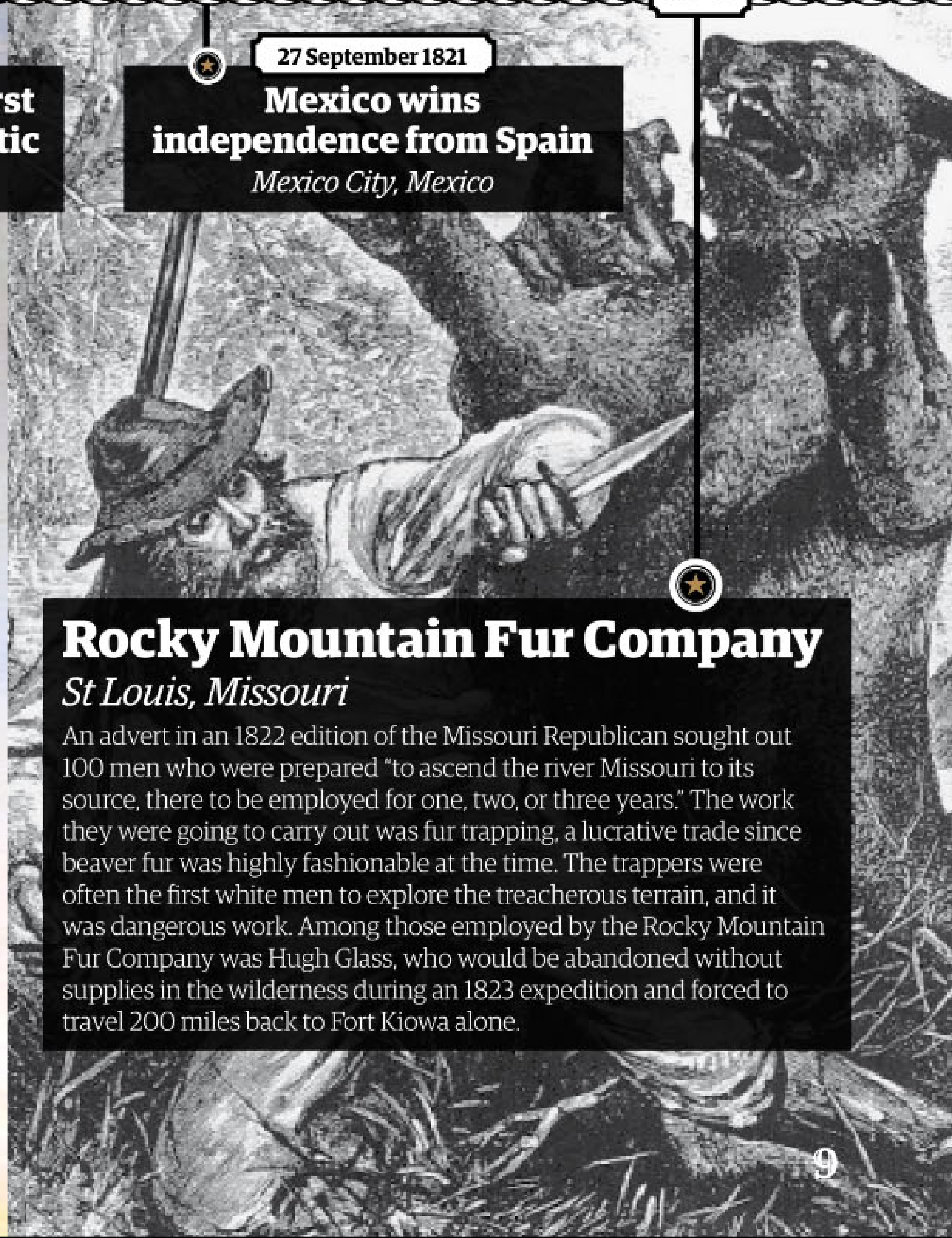
Washington, DC

27 September 1821

Mexico wins independence from Spain

Mexico City, Mexico

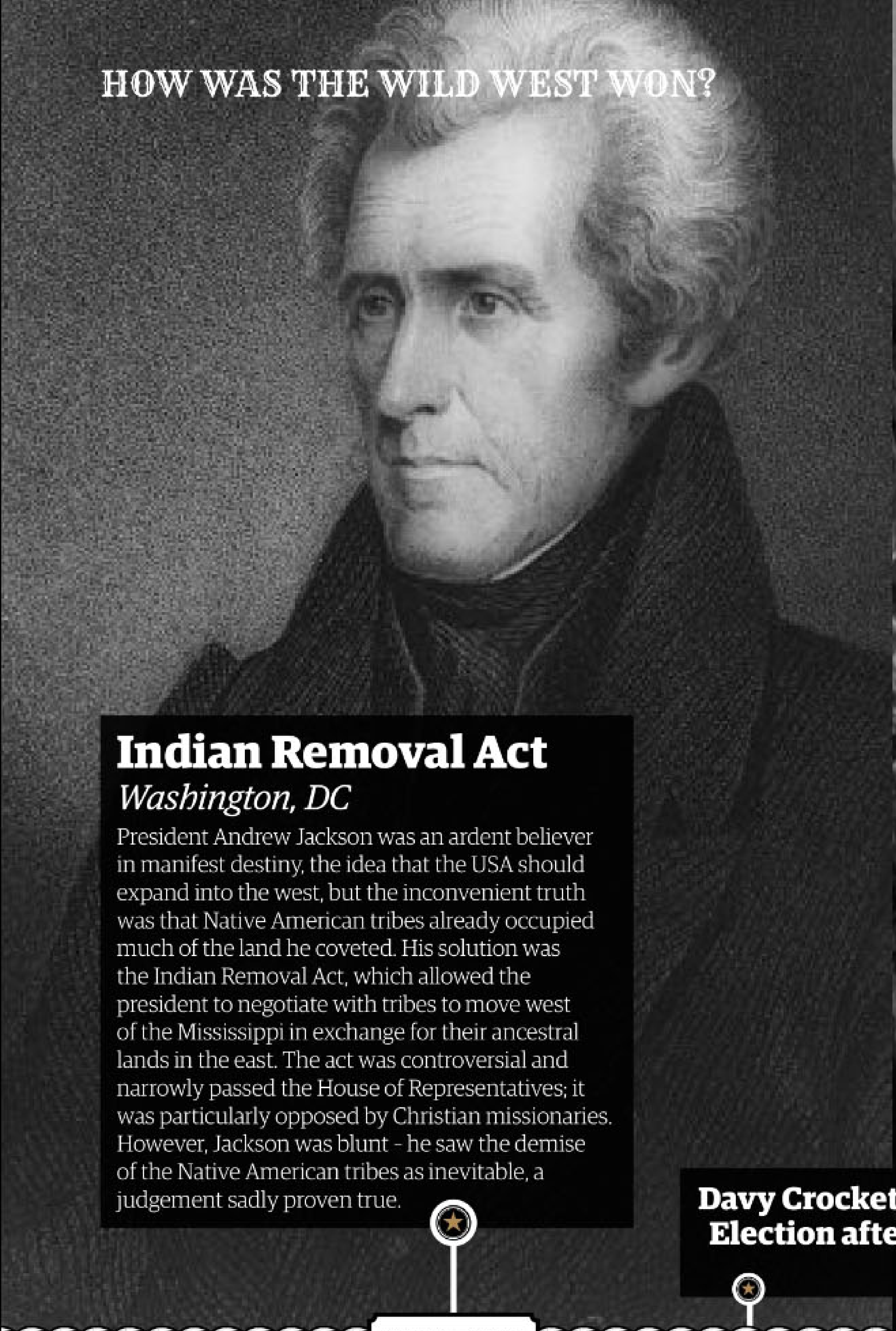
1822

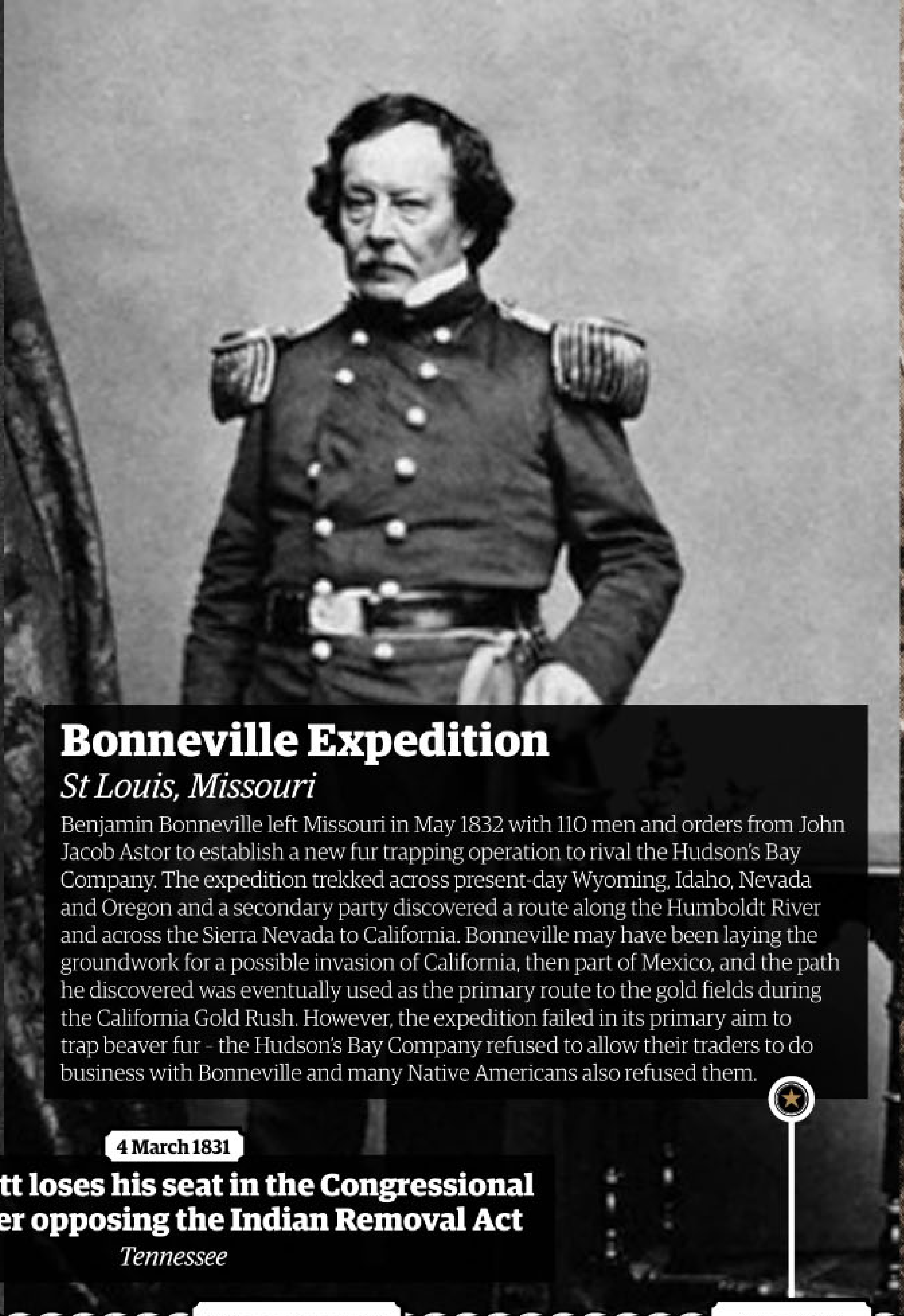


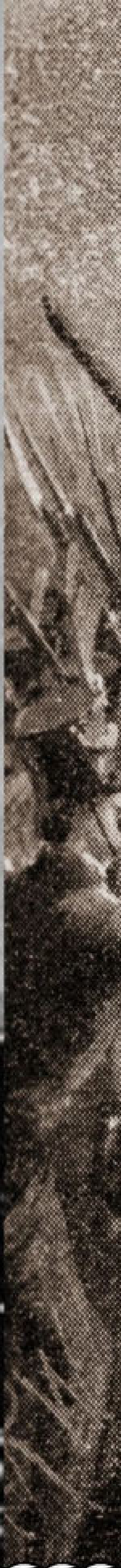
Rocky Mountain Fur Company

St Louis, Missouri

An advert in an 1822 edition of the Missouri Republican sought out 100 men who were prepared "to ascend the river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two, or three years." The work they were going to carry out was fur trapping, a lucrative trade since beaver fur was highly fashionable at the time. The trappers were often the first white men to explore the treacherous terrain, and it was dangerous work. Among those employed by the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was Hugh Glass, who would be abandoned without supplies in the wilderness during an 1823 expedition and forced to travel 200 miles back to Fort Kiowa alone.







4 July 1826

Thomas Jefferson dies on Independence Day

Monticello, Virginia

28 May 1830

Indian Removal Act

Washington, DC

President Andrew Jackson was an ardent believer in manifest destiny, the idea that the USA should expand into the west, but the inconvenient truth was that Native American tribes already occupied much of the land he coveted. His solution was the Indian Removal Act, which allowed the president to negotiate with tribes to move west of the Mississippi in exchange for their ancestral lands in the east. The act was controversial and narrowly passed the House of Representatives; it was particularly opposed by Christian missionaries. However, Jackson was blunt - he saw the demise of the Native American tribes as inevitable, a judgement sadly proven true.

4 March 1831

Davy Crockett loses his seat in the Congressional Election after opposing the Indian Removal Act

Tennessee

1 November 1831

Trail of Tears

Mississippi

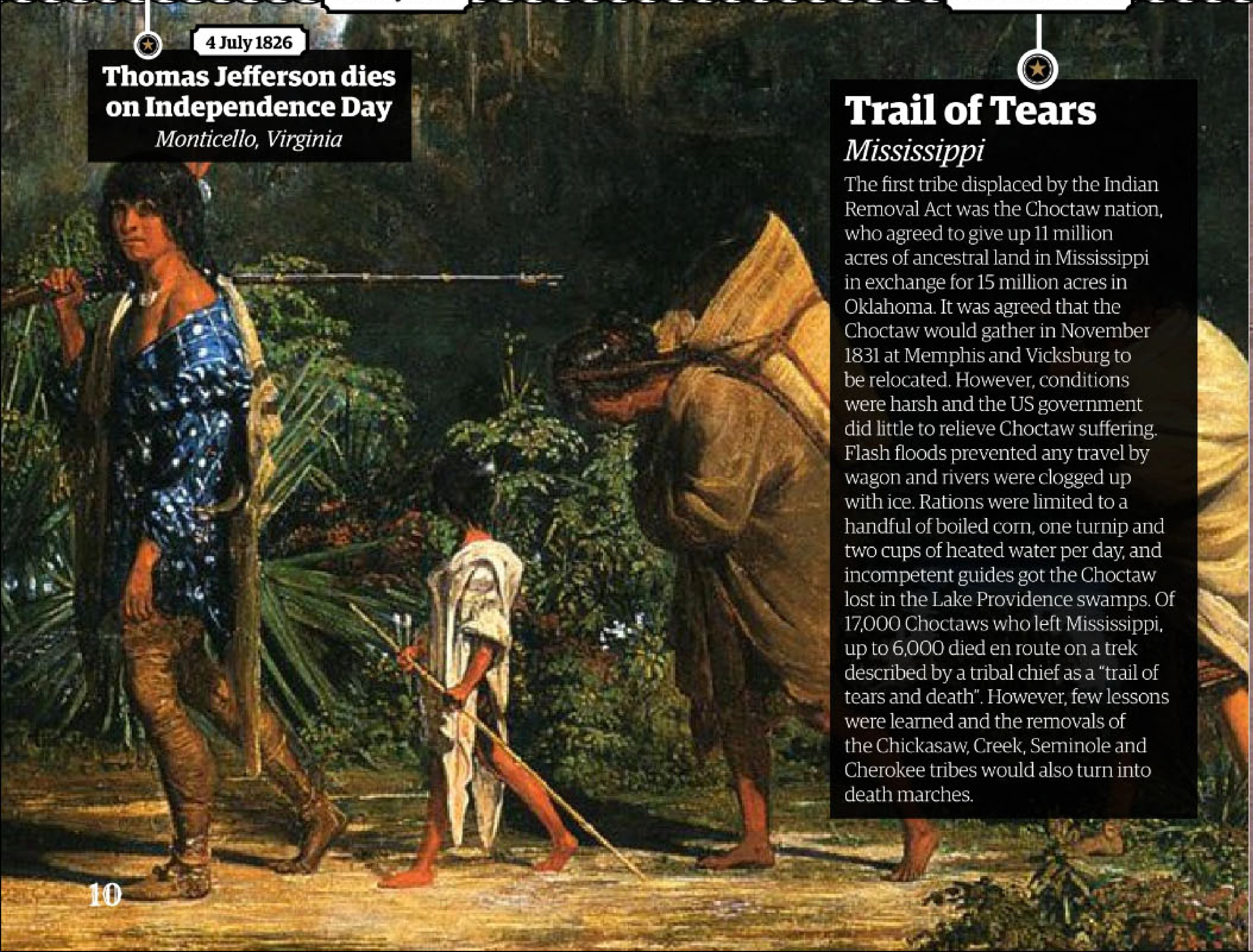
The first tribe displaced by the Indian Removal Act was the Choctaw nation, who agreed to give up 11 million acres of ancestral land in Mississippi in exchange for 15 million acres in Oklahoma. It was agreed that the Choctaw would gather in November 1831 at Memphis and Vicksburg to be relocated. However, conditions were harsh and the US government did little to relieve Choctaw suffering. Flash floods prevented any travel by wagon and rivers were clogged up with ice. Rations were limited to a handful of boiled corn, one turnip and two cups of heated water per day, and incompetent guides got the Choctaw lost in the Lake Providence swamps. Of 17,000 Choctaws who left Mississippi, up to 6,000 died en route on a trek described by a tribal chief as a "trail of tears and death". However, few lessons were learned and the removals of the Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole and Cherokee tribes would also turn into death marches.

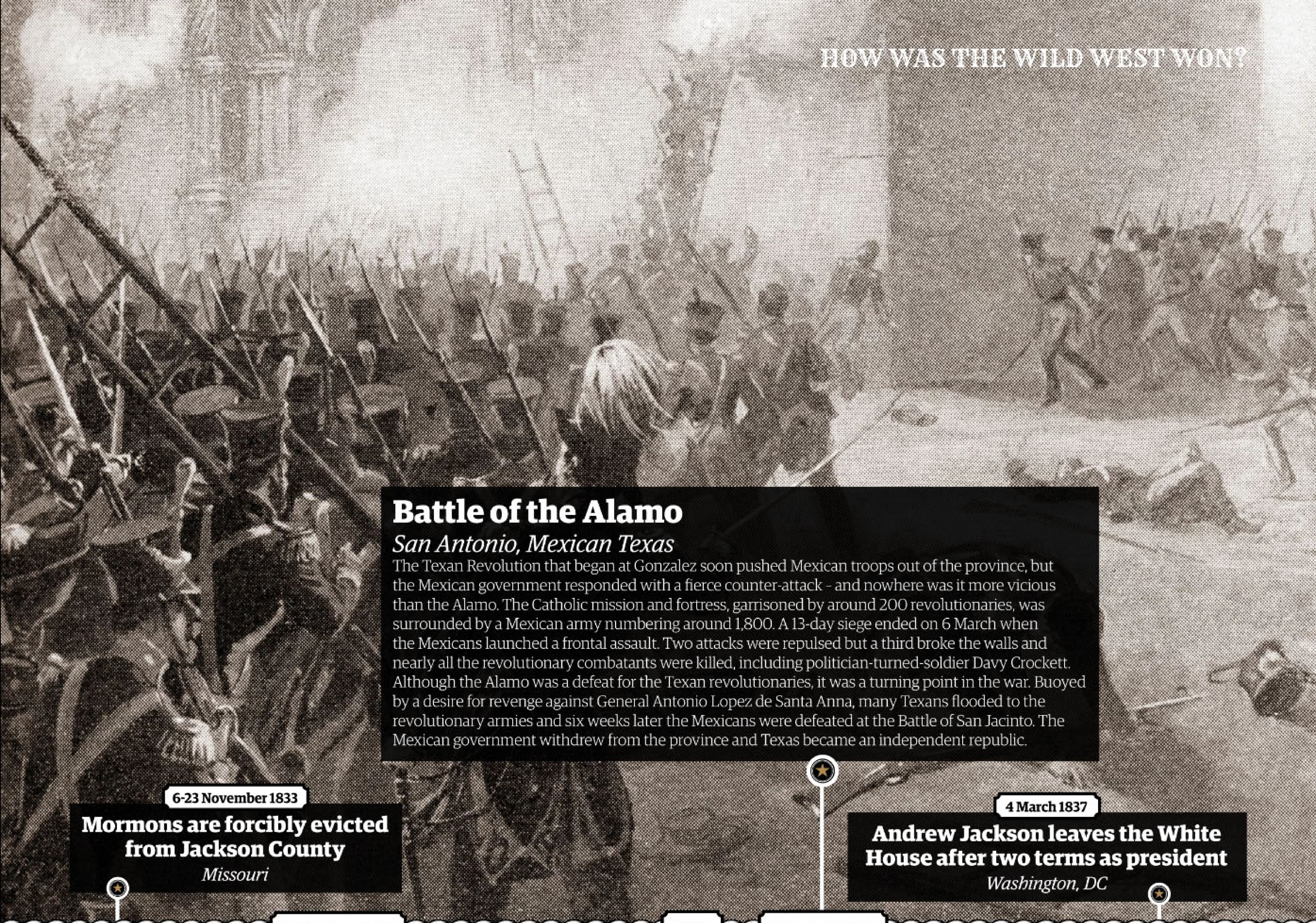
May 1832

Bonneville Expedition

St Louis, Missouri

Benjamin Bonneville left Missouri in May 1832 with 110 men and orders from John Jacob Astor to establish a new fur trapping operation to rival the Hudson's Bay Company. The expedition trekked across present-day Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada and Oregon and a secondary party discovered a route along the Humboldt River and across the Sierra Nevada to California. Bonneville may have been laying the groundwork for a possible invasion of California, then part of Mexico, and the path he discovered was eventually used as the primary route to the gold fields during the California Gold Rush. However, the expedition failed in its primary aim to trap beaver fur - the Hudson's Bay Company refused to allow their traders to do business with Bonneville and many Native Americans also refused them.





6-23 November 1833

Mormons are forcibly evicted from Jackson County

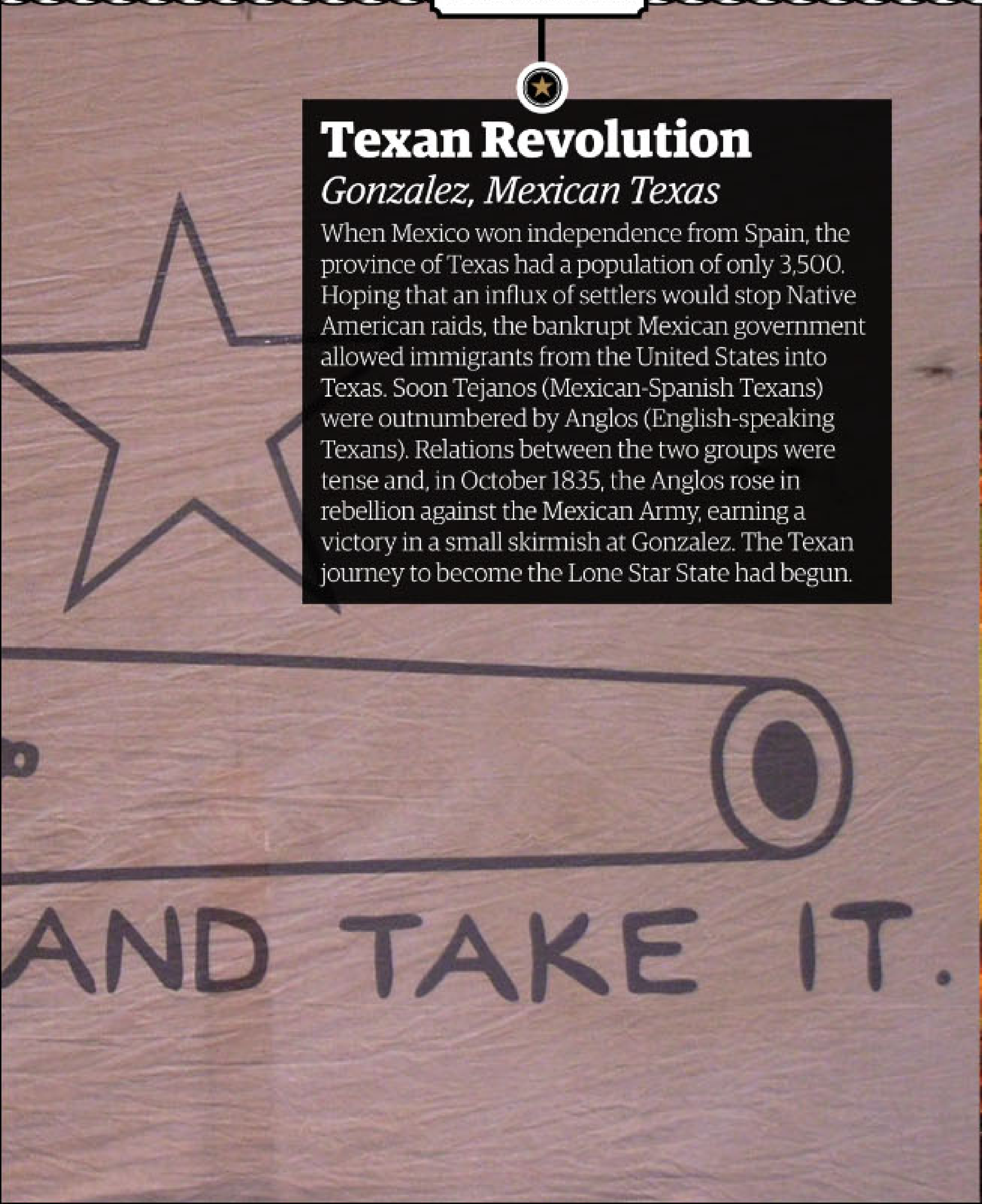
Missouri

2 October 1835

Texan Revolution

Gonzalez, Mexican Texas

When Mexico won independence from Spain, the province of Texas had a population of only 3,500. Hoping that an influx of settlers would stop Native American raids, the bankrupt Mexican government allowed immigrants from the United States into Texas. Soon Tejanos (Mexican-Spanish Texans) were outnumbered by Anglos (English-speaking Texans). Relations between the two groups were tense and, in October 1835, the Anglos rose in rebellion against the Mexican Army, earning a victory in a small skirmish at Gonzalez. The Texan journey to become the Lone Star State had begun.

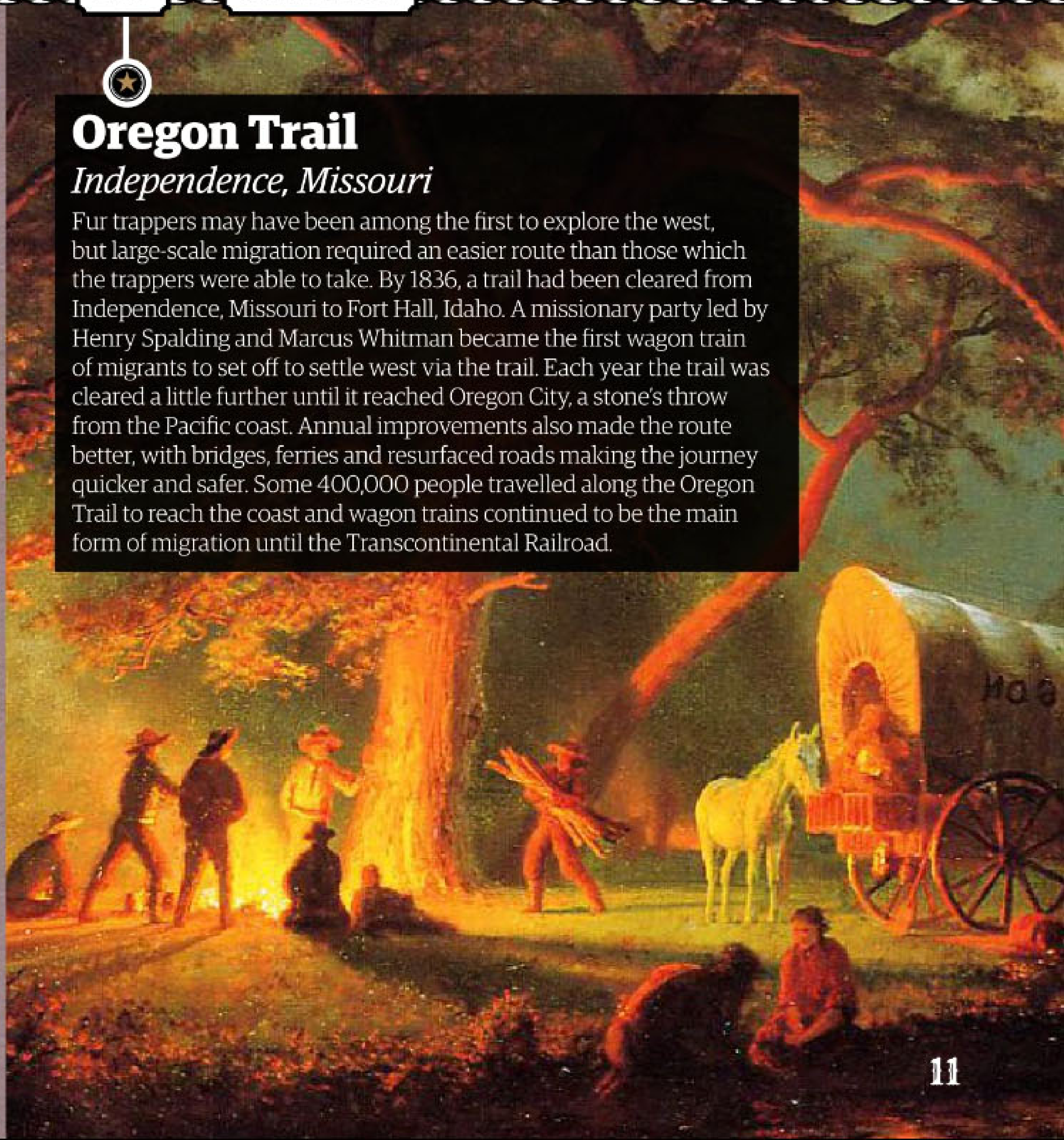


1836

Oregon Trail

Independence, Missouri

Fur trappers may have been among the first to explore the west, but large-scale migration required an easier route than those which the trappers were able to take. By 1836, a trail had been cleared from Independence, Missouri to Fort Hall, Idaho. A missionary party led by Henry Spalding and Marcus Whitman became the first wagon train of migrants to set off to settle west via the trail. Each year the trail was cleared a little further until it reached Oregon City, a stone's throw from the Pacific coast. Annual improvements also made the route better, with bridges, ferries and resurfaced roads making the journey quicker and safer. Some 400,000 people travelled along the Oregon Trail to reach the coast and wagon trains continued to be the main form of migration until the Transcontinental Railroad.



6 March 1836

Battle of the Alamo

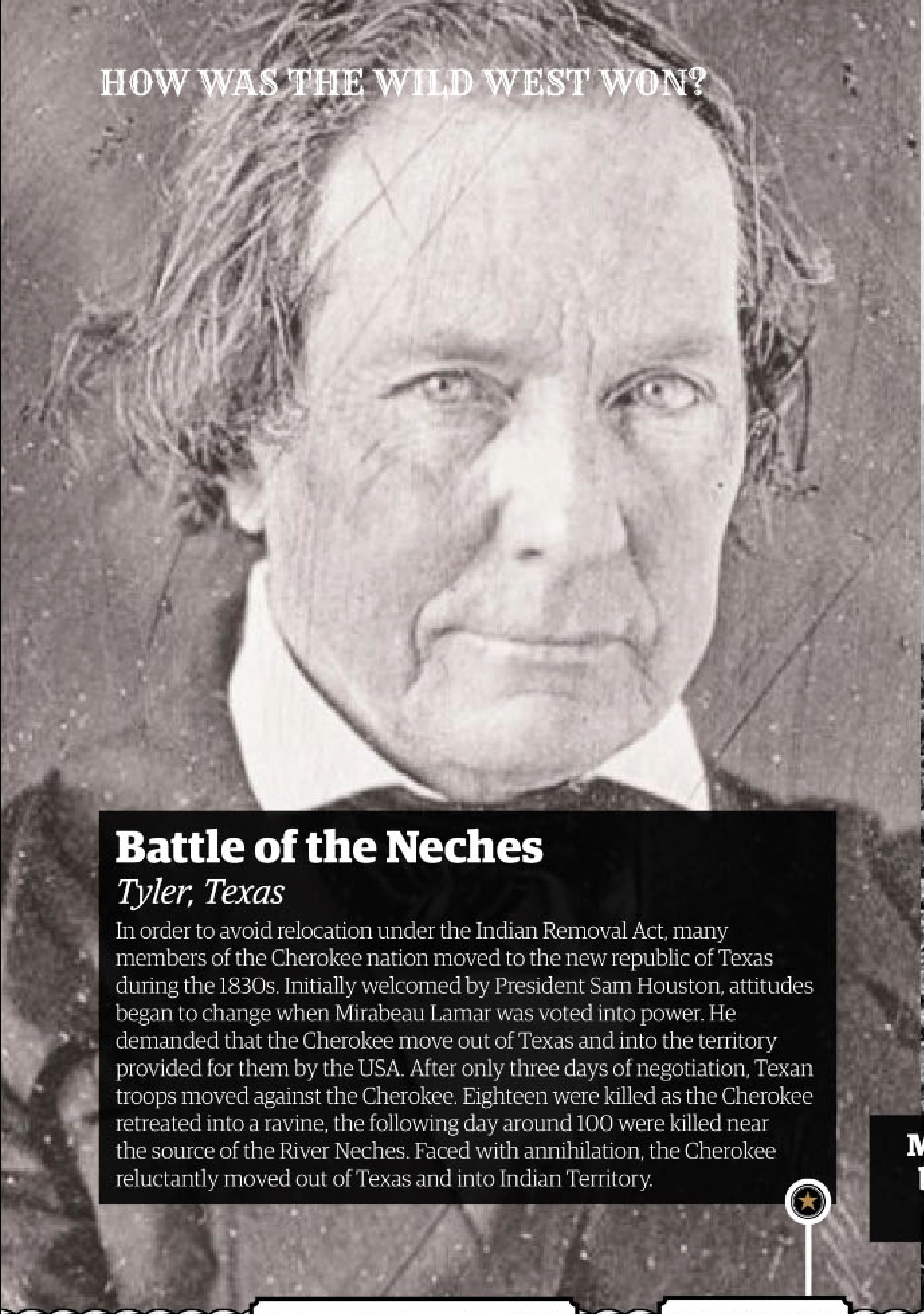
San Antonio, Mexican Texas

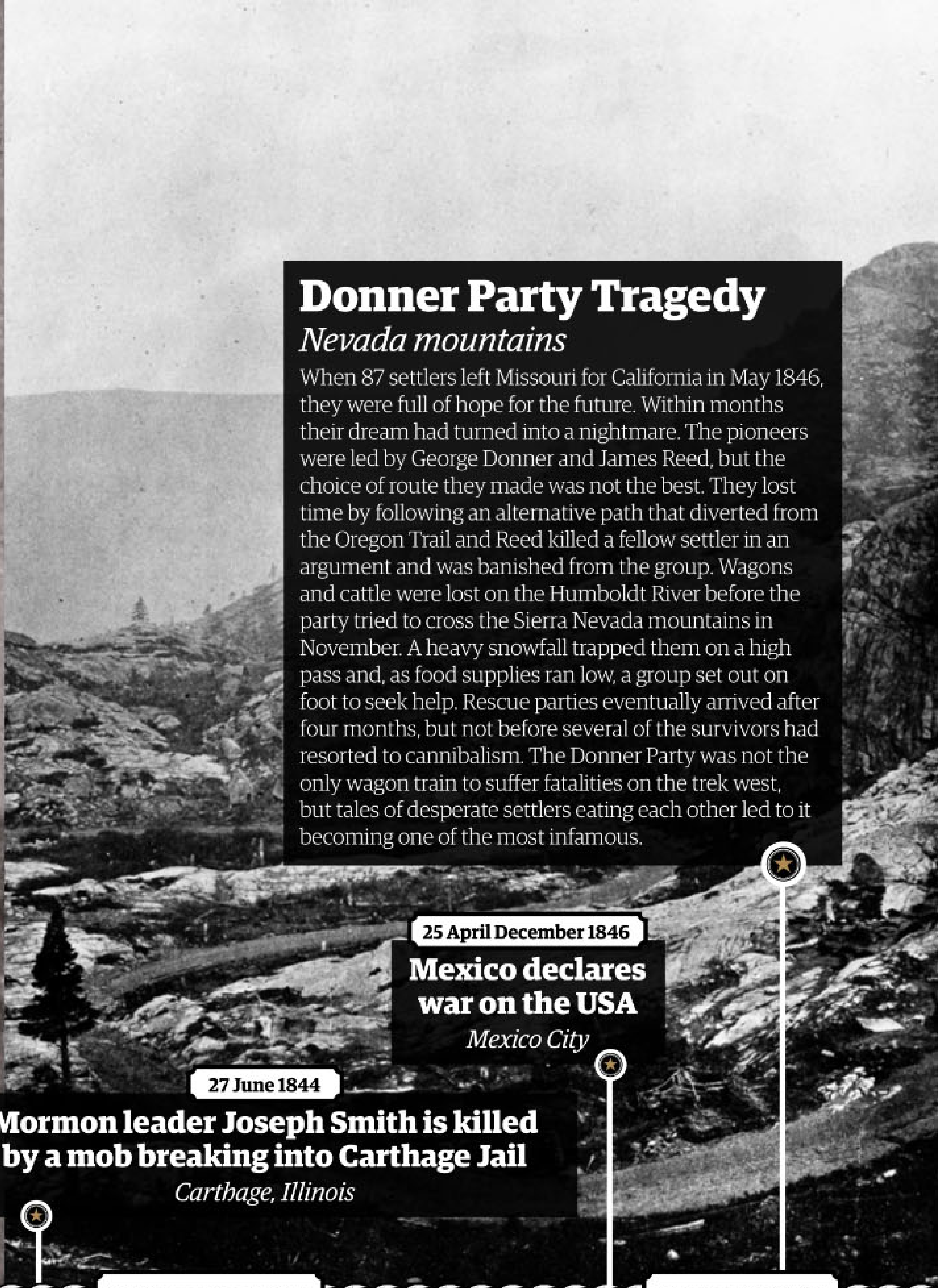
The Texan Revolution that began at Gonzalez soon pushed Mexican troops out of the province, but the Mexican government responded with a fierce counter-attack - and nowhere was it more vicious than the Alamo. The Catholic mission and fortress, garrisoned by around 200 revolutionaries, was surrounded by a Mexican army numbering around 1,800. A 13-day siege ended on 6 March when the Mexicans launched a frontal assault. Two attacks were repulsed but a third broke the walls and nearly all the revolutionary combatants were killed, including politician-turned-soldier Davy Crockett. Although the Alamo was a defeat for the Texan revolutionaries, it was a turning point in the war. Buoyed by a desire for revenge against General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, many Texans flooded to the revolutionary armies and six weeks later the Mexicans were defeated at the Battle of San Jacinto. The Mexican government withdrew from the province and Texas became an independent republic.

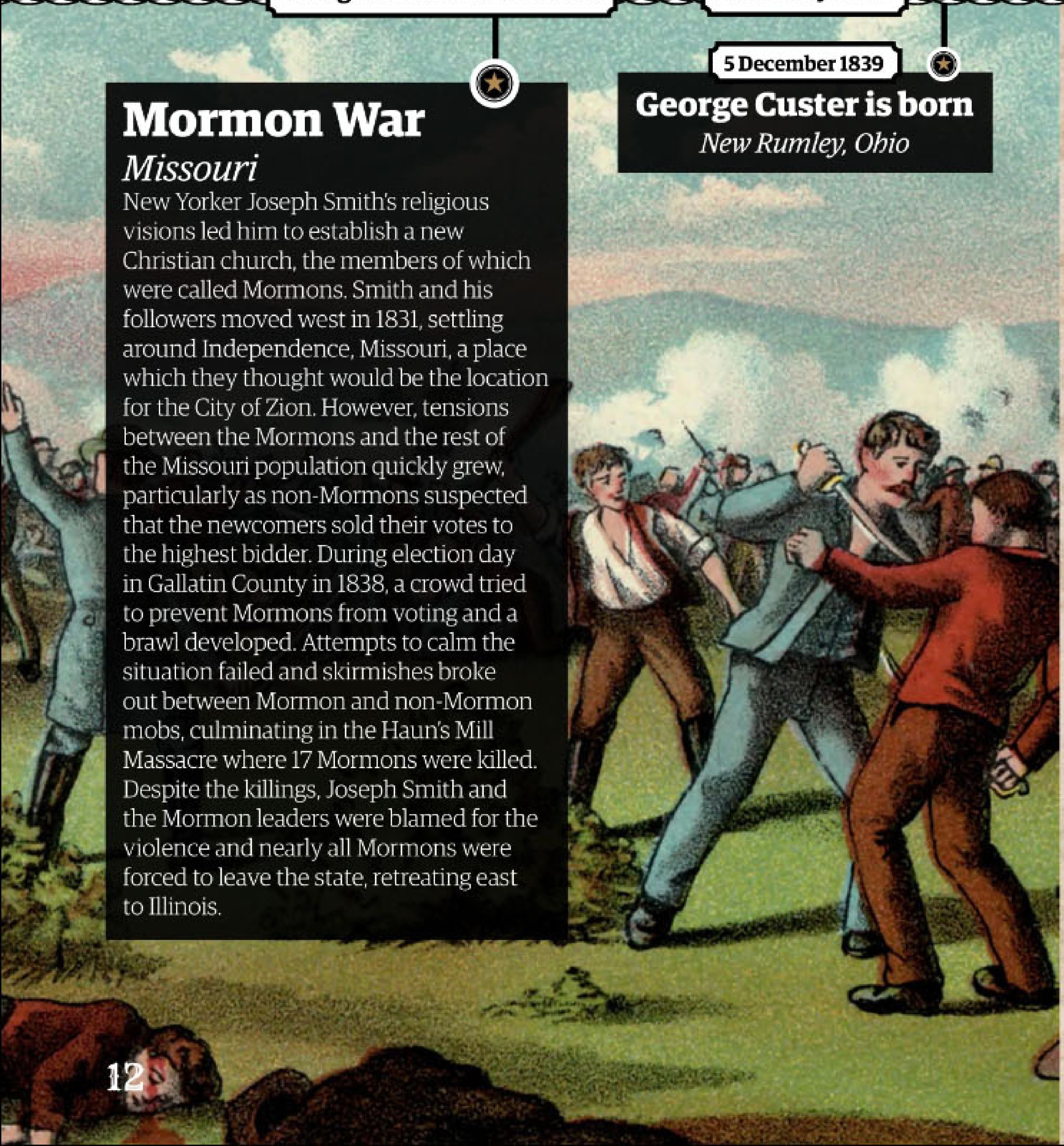
4 March 1837

Andrew Jackson leaves the White House after two terms as president

Washington, DC







6 August-1 November 1838

Mormon War

Missouri

New Yorker Joseph Smith's religious visions led him to establish a new Christian church, the members of which were called Mormons. Smith and his followers moved west in 1831, settling around Independence, Missouri, a place which they thought would be the location for the City of Zion. However, tensions between the Mormons and the rest of the Missouri population quickly grew, particularly as non-Mormons suspected that the newcomers sold their votes to the highest bidder. During election day in Gallatin County in 1838, a crowd tried to prevent Mormons from voting and a brawl developed. Attempts to calm the situation failed and skirmishes broke out between Mormon and non-Mormon mobs, culminating in the Haun's Mill Massacre where 17 Mormons were killed. Despite the killings, Joseph Smith and the Mormon leaders were blamed for the violence and nearly all Mormons were forced to leave the state, retreating east to Illinois.

15-16 July 1839

Battle of the Neches

Tyler, Texas

In order to avoid relocation under the Indian Removal Act, many members of the Cherokee nation moved to the new republic of Texas during the 1830s. Initially welcomed by President Sam Houston, attitudes began to change when Mirabeau Lamar was voted into power. He demanded that the Cherokee move out of Texas and into the territory provided for them by the USA. After only three days of negotiation, Texan troops moved against the Cherokee. Eighteen were killed as the Cherokee retreated into a ravine, the following day around 100 were killed near the source of the River Neches. Faced with annihilation, the Cherokee reluctantly moved out of Texas and into Indian Territory.

5 December 1839

George Custer is born

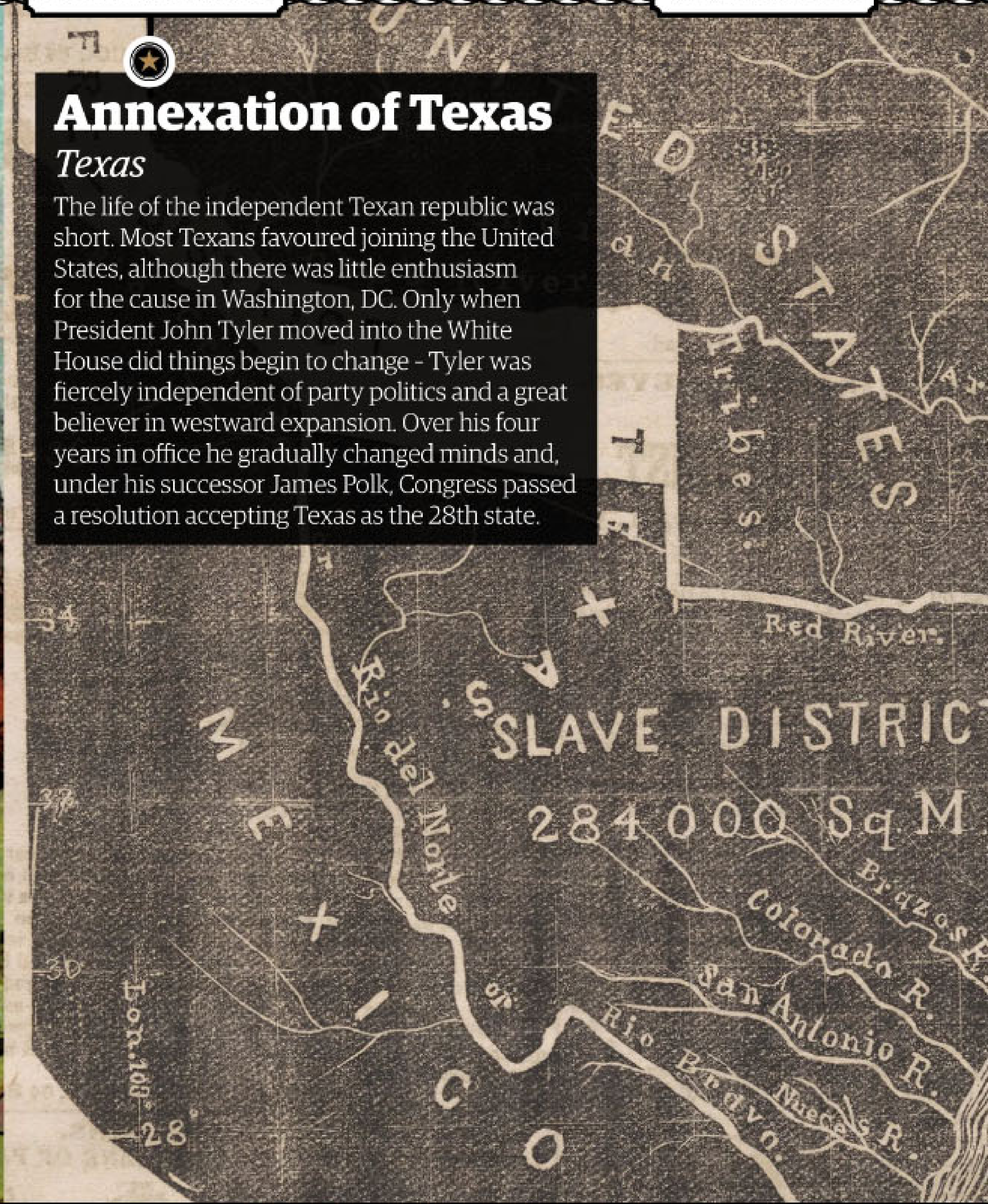
New Rumley, Ohio

27 June 1844

Mormon leader Joseph Smith is killed by a mob breaking into Carthage Jail

Carthage, Illinois

29 December 1845



Annexation of Texas

Texas

The life of the independent Texan republic was short. Most Texans favoured joining the United States, although there was little enthusiasm for the cause in Washington, DC. Only when President John Tyler moved into the White House did things begin to change – Tyler was fiercely independent of party politics and a great believer in westward expansion. Over his four years in office he gradually changed minds and, under his successor James Polk, Congress passed a resolution accepting Texas as the 28th state.

25 April December 1846

Mexico declares war on the USA

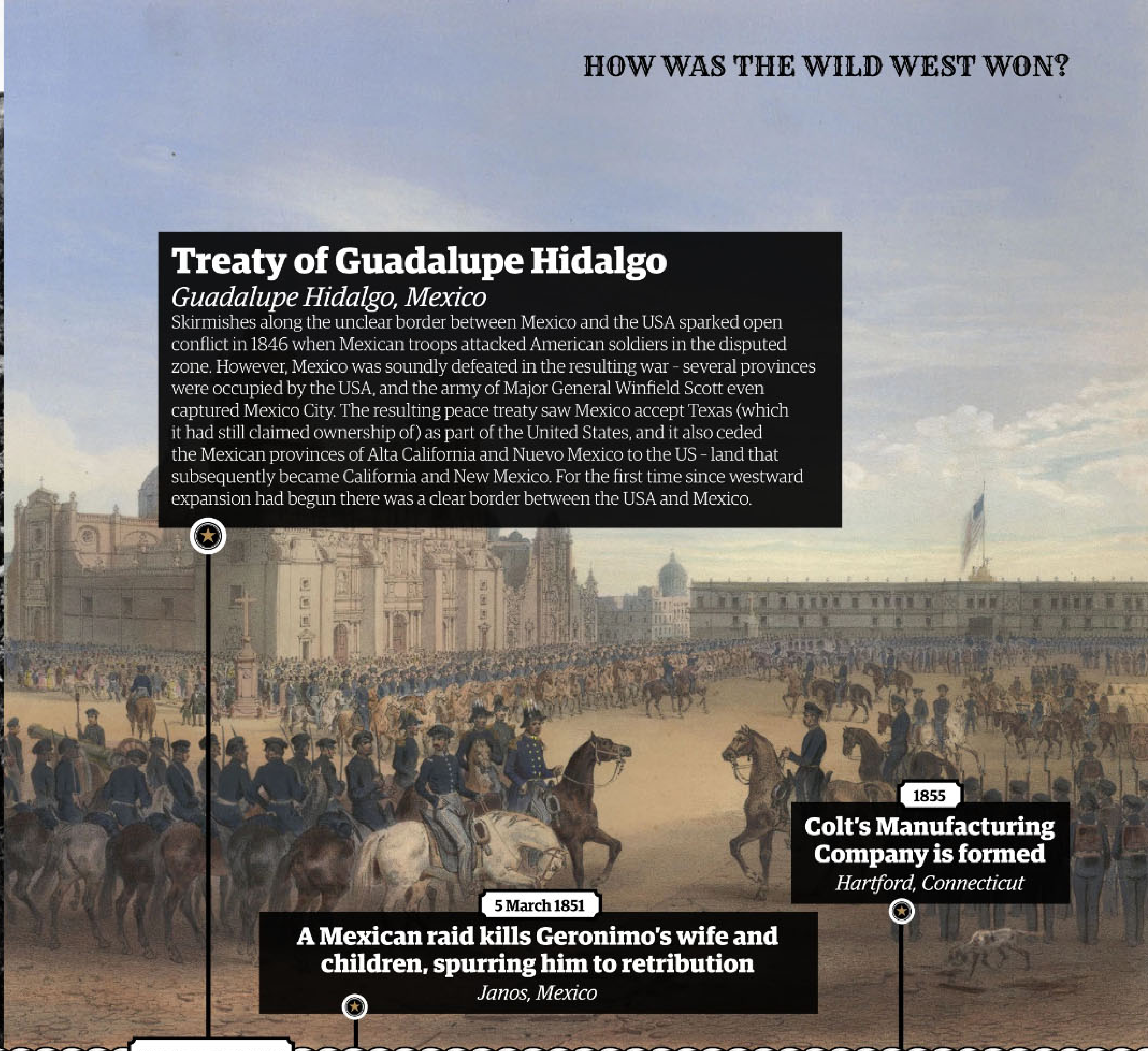
Mexico City

Winter 1846-47

Donner Party Tragedy

Nevada mountains

When 87 settlers left Missouri for California in May 1846, they were full of hope for the future. Within months their dream had turned into a nightmare. The pioneers were led by George Donner and James Reed, but the choice of route they made was not the best. They lost time by following an alternative path that diverted from the Oregon Trail and Reed killed a fellow settler in an argument and was banished from the group. Wagons and cattle were lost on the Humboldt River before the party tried to cross the Sierra Nevada mountains in November. A heavy snowfall trapped them on a high pass and, as food supplies ran low, a group set out on foot to seek help. Rescue parties eventually arrived after four months, but not before several of the survivors had resorted to cannibalism. The Donner Party was not the only wagon train to suffer fatalities on the trek west, but tales of desperate settlers eating each other led to it becoming one of the most infamous.



2 February 1848

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico

Skirmishes along the unclear border between Mexico and the USA sparked open conflict in 1846 when Mexican troops attacked American soldiers in the disputed zone. However, Mexico was soundly defeated in the resulting war - several provinces were occupied by the USA, and the army of Major General Winfield Scott even captured Mexico City. The resulting peace treaty saw Mexico accept Texas (which it had still claimed ownership of) as part of the United States, and it also ceded the Mexican provinces of Alta California and Nuevo Mexico to the US - land that subsequently became California and New Mexico. For the first time since westward expansion had begun there was a clear border between the USA and Mexico.

5 March 1851

A Mexican raid kills Geronimo's wife and children, spurring him to retribution

Janos, Mexico

1855

Colt's Manufacturing Company is formed

Hartford, Connecticut

May-July 1857

Second Bonneville Expedition attacks Apache tribes

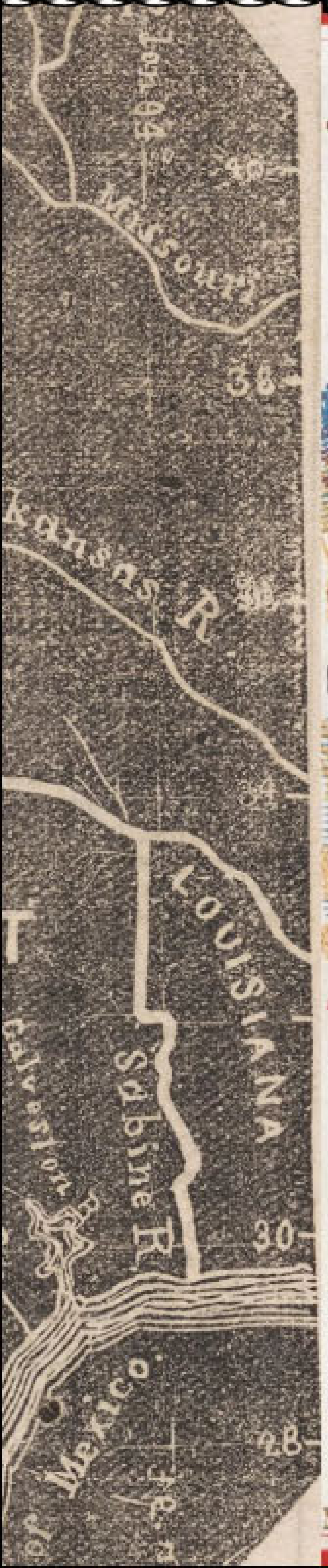
Arizona

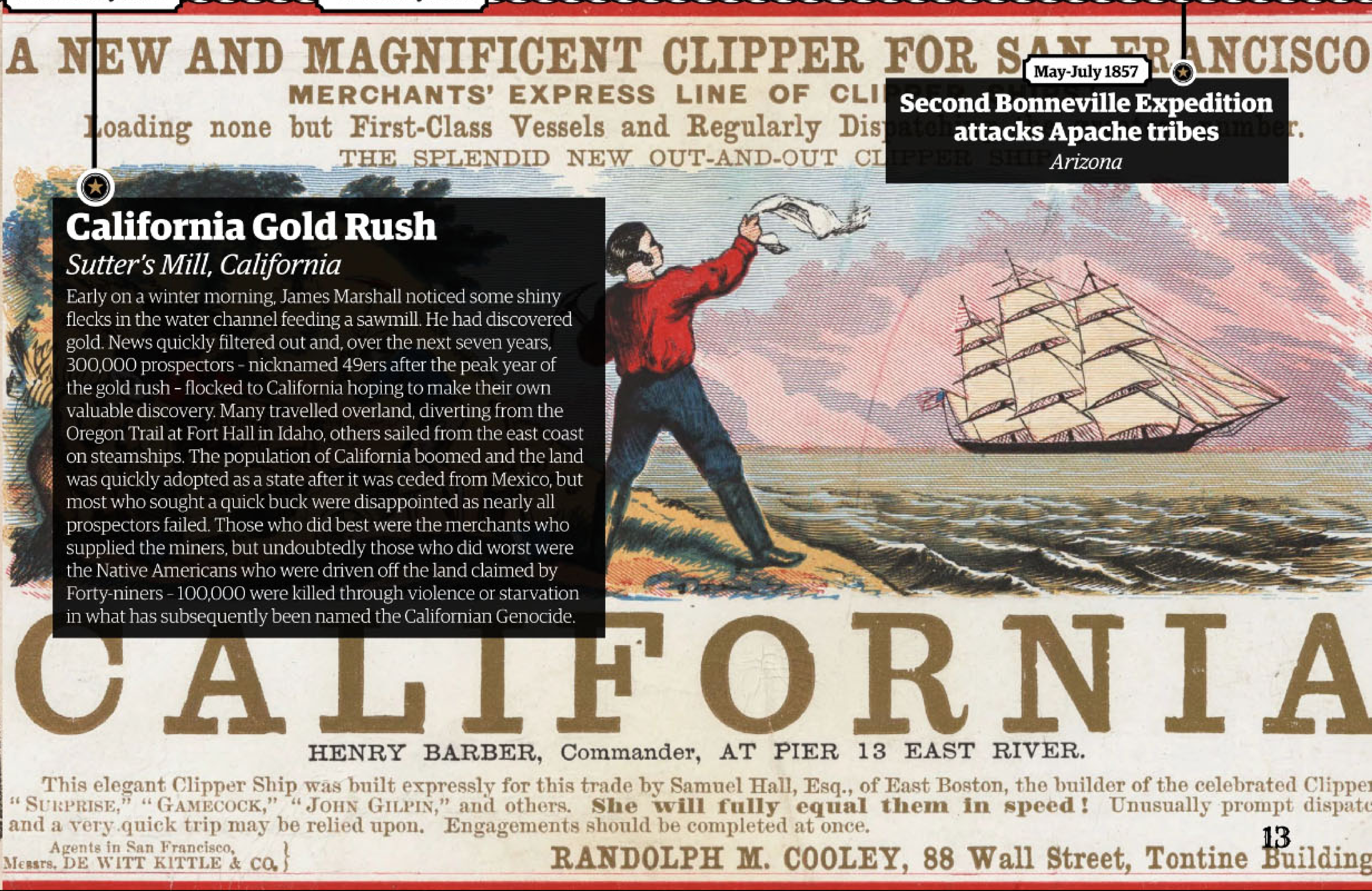
24 January 1848

California Gold Rush

Sutter's Mill, California

Early on a winter morning, James Marshall noticed some shiny flecks in the water channel feeding a sawmill. He had discovered gold. News quickly filtered out and, over the next seven years, 300,000 prospectors - nicknamed 49ers after the peak year of the gold rush - flocked to California hoping to make their own valuable discovery. Many travelled overland, diverting from the Oregon Trail at Fort Hall in Idaho, others sailed from the east coast on steamships. The population of California boomed and the land was quickly adopted as a state after it was ceded from Mexico, but most who sought a quick buck were disappointed as nearly all prospectors failed. Those who did best were the merchants who supplied the miners, but undoubtedly those who did worst were the Native Americans who were driven off the land claimed by Forty-niners - 100,000 were killed through violence or starvation in what has subsequently been named the Californian Genocide.





A NEW AND MAGNIFICENT CLIPPER FOR SAN FRANCISCO

MERCHANTS' EXPRESS LINE OF CLI

Loading none but First-Class Vessels and Regularly Dispatch mber.

THE SPLENDID NEW OUT-AND-OUT CLIPPER SHIP

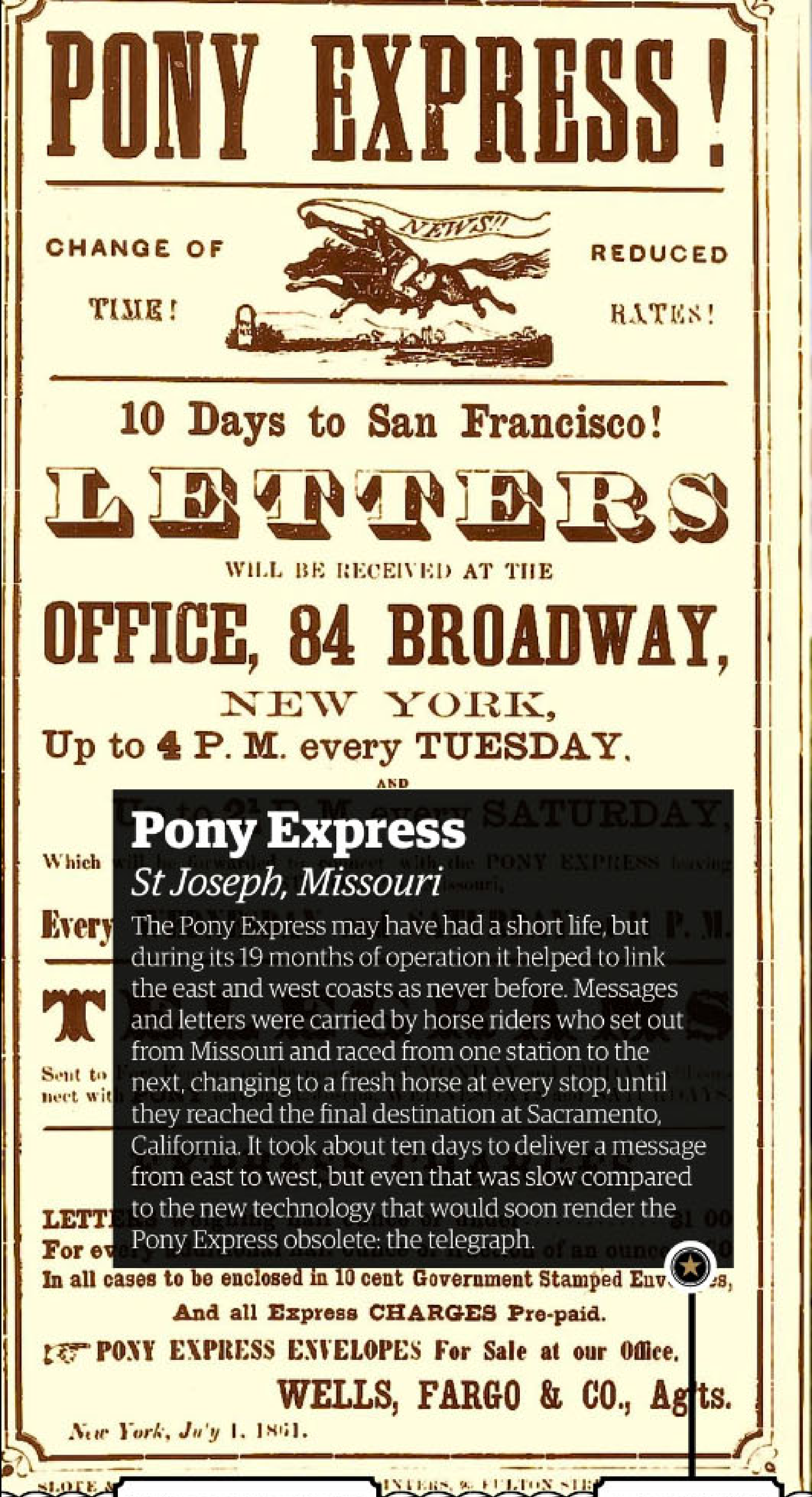
CALIFORNIA

HENRY BARBER, Commander, AT PIER 13 EAST RIVER.

This elegant Clipper Ship was built expressly for this trade by Samuel Hall, Esq., of East Boston, the builder of the celebrated Clipper "SURPRISE," "GAMECOCK," "JOHN GILPIN," and others. **She will fully equal them in speed!** Unusually prompt dispatc and a very quick trip may be relied upon. Engagements should be completed at once.

Agents in San Francisco,
Messrs. DE WITT KITTLE & CO.

RANDOLPH M. COOLEY, 88 Wall Street, Tontine Building


PONY EXPRESS!

CHANGE OF TIME! REDUCED RATES!

10 Days to San Francisco!

LETTERS

WILL BE RECEIVED AT THE

OFFICE, 84 BROADWAY,

NEW YORK,

Up to 4 P. M. every TUESDAY,

AND

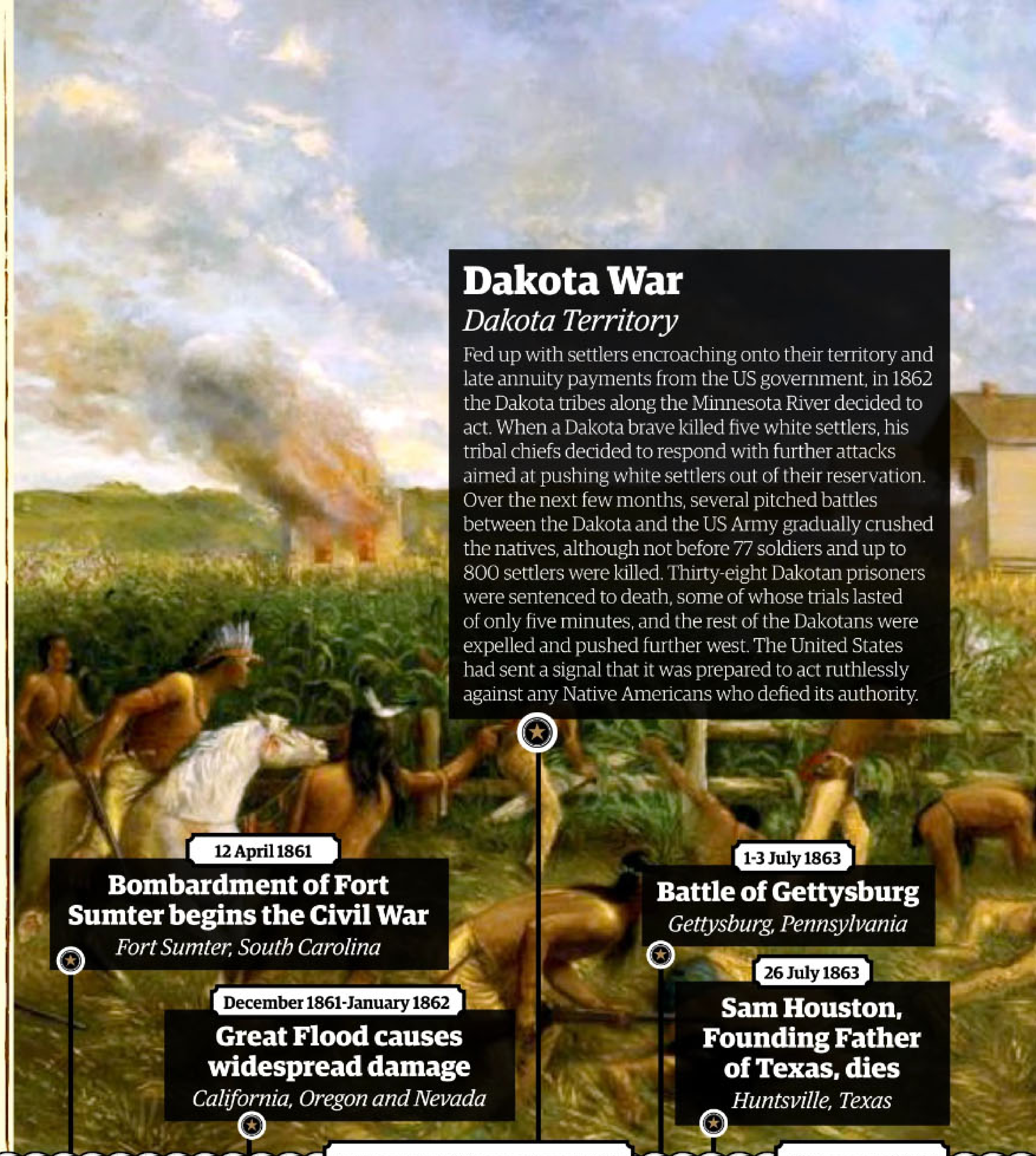
In all cases to be enclosed in 10 cent Government Stamped Env es,

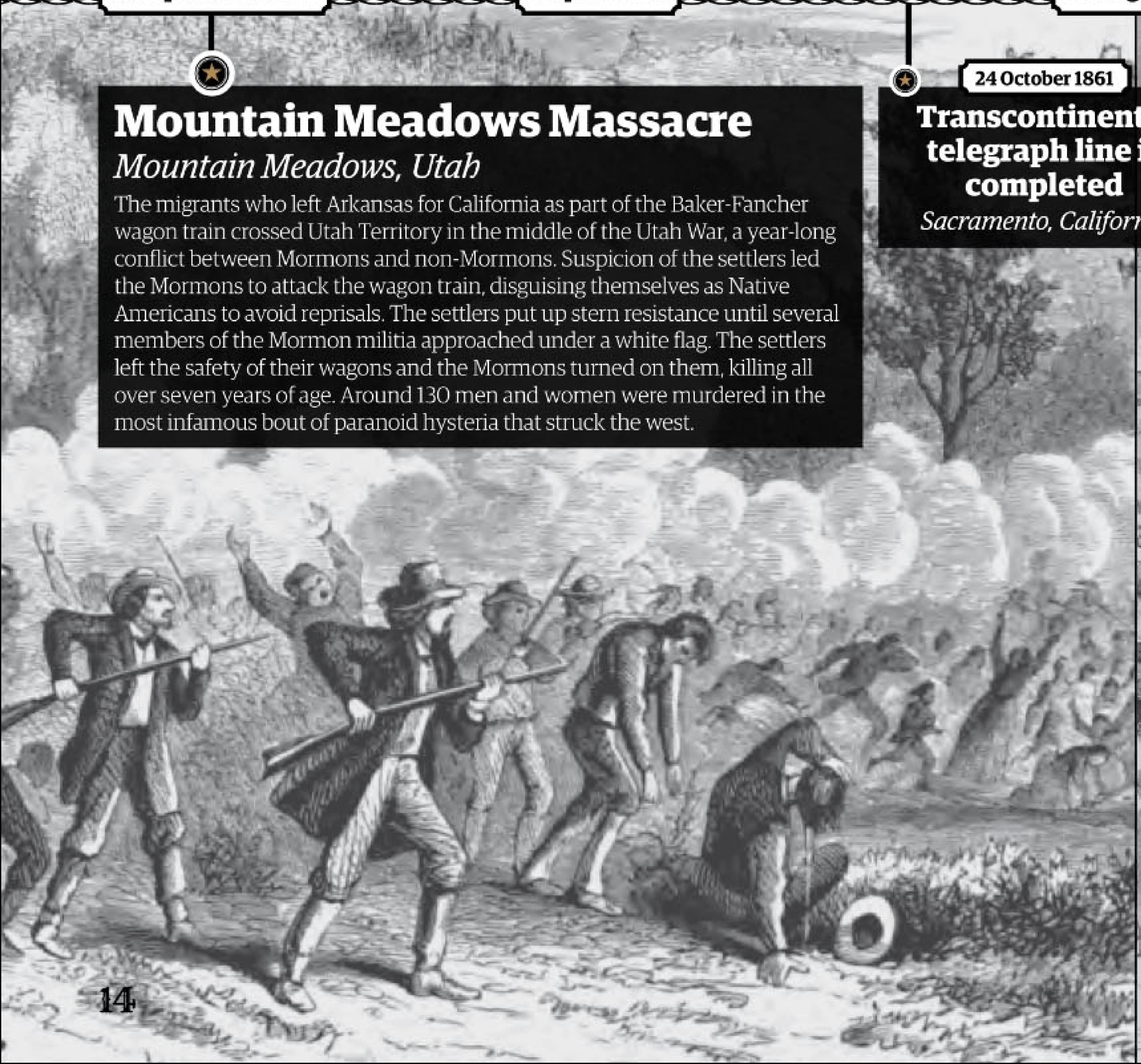
And all Express CHARGES Pre-paid.

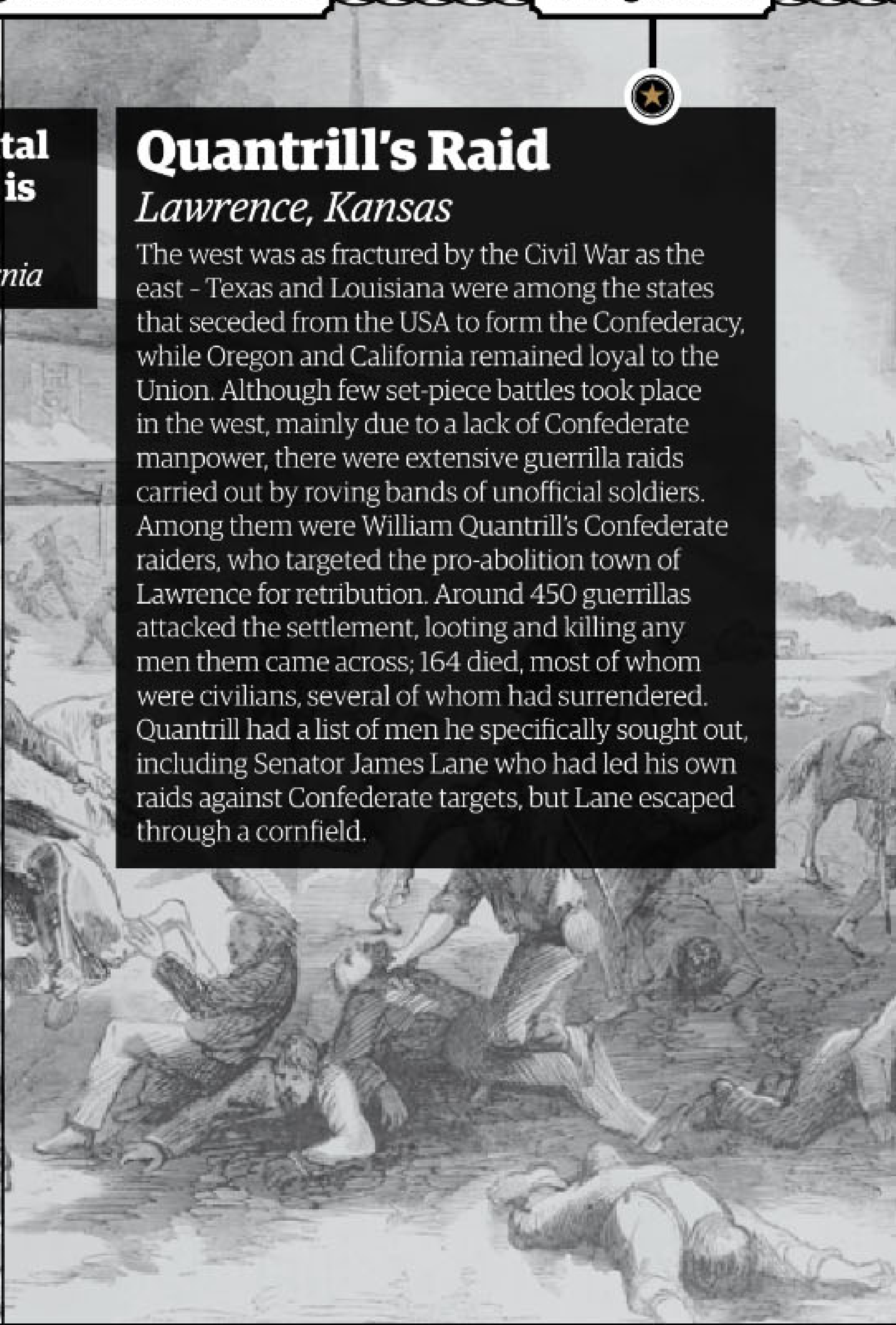
PONY EXPRESS ENVELOPES For Sale at our Office.

WELLS, FARGO & CO., Ag ts.

New York, Ju'y 1, 1861.







11 September 1857

Mountain Meadows Massacre

Mountain Meadows, Utah

The migrants who left Arkansas for California as part of the Baker-Fancher wagon train crossed Utah Territory in the middle of the Utah War, a year-long conflict between Mormons and non-Mormons. Suspicion of the settlers led the Mormons to attack the wagon train, disguising themselves as Native Americans to avoid reprisals. The settlers put up stern resistance until several members of the Mormon militia approached under a white flag. The settlers left the safety of their wagons and the Mormons turned on them, killing all over seven years of age. Around 130 men and women were murdered in the most infamous bout of paranoid hysteria that struck the west.

3 April 1860

Pony Express

St Joseph, Missouri

The Pony Express may have had a short life, but during its 19 months of operation it helped to link the east and west coasts as never before. Messages and letters were carried by horse riders who set out from Missouri and raced from one station to the next, changing to a fresh horse at every stop, until they reached the final destination at Sacramento, California. It took about ten days to deliver a message from east to west, but even that was slow compared to the new technology that would soon render the Pony Express obsolete: the telegraph.

12 April 1861

Bombardment of Fort Sumter begins the Civil War

Fort Sumter, South Carolina

24 October 1861

Transcontinental telegraph line is completed

Sacramento, California

December 1861-January 1862

Great Flood causes widespread damage

California, Oregon and Nevada

17 August-26 December 1862

Dakota War

Dakota Territory

Fed up with settlers encroaching onto their territory and late annuity payments from the US government, in 1862 the Dakota tribes along the Minnesota River decided to act. When a Dakota brave killed five white settlers, his tribal chiefs decided to respond with further attacks aimed at pushing white settlers out of their reservation. Over the next few months, several pitched battles between the Dakota and the US Army gradually crushed the natives, although not before 77 soldiers and up to 800 settlers were killed. Thirty-eight Dakotan prisoners were sentenced to death, some of whose trials lasted of only five minutes, and the rest of the Dakotans were expelled and pushed further west. The United States had sent a signal that it was prepared to act ruthlessly against any Native Americans who defied its authority.

1-3 July 1863

Battle of Gettysburg

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

26 July 1863

Sam Houston, Founding Father of Texas, dies

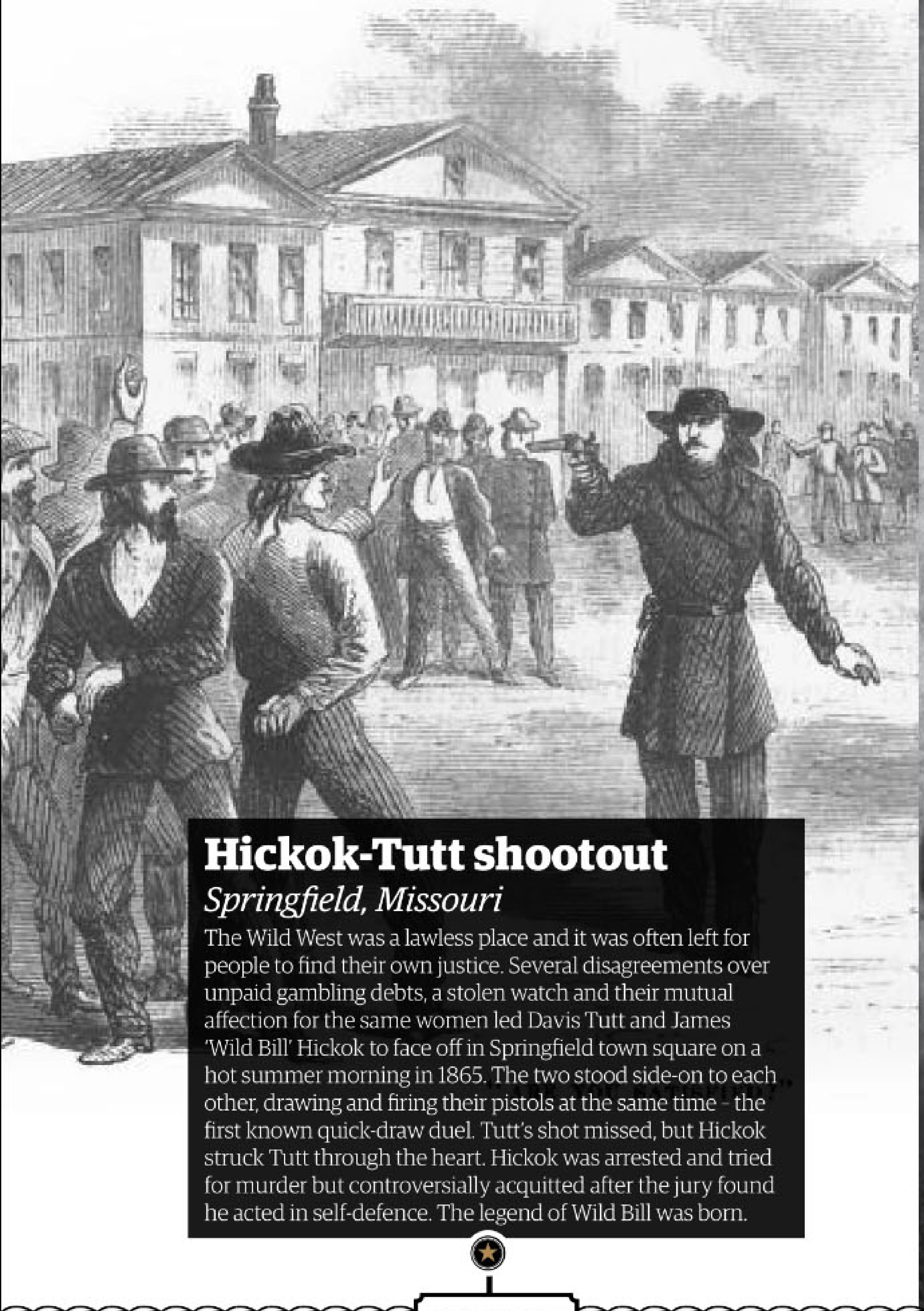
Huntsville, Texas

21 August 1863

Quantrill's Raid

Lawrence, Kansas

The west was as fractured by the Civil War as the east – Texas and Louisiana were among the states that seceded from the USA to form the Confederacy, while Oregon and California remained loyal to the Union. Although few set-piece battles took place in the west, mainly due to a lack of Confederate manpower, there were extensive guerrilla raids carried out by roving bands of unofficial soldiers. Among them were William Quantrill's Confederate raiders, who targeted the pro-abolition town of Lawrence for retribution. Around 450 guerrillas attacked the settlement, looting and killing any men them came across; 164 died, most of whom were civilians, several of whom had surrendered. Quantrill had a list of men he specifically sought out, including Senator James Lane who had led his own raids against Confederate targets, but Lane escaped through a cornfield.



15 April 1865

Abraham Lincoln is assassinated by a Confederate sympathiser

Washington, DC

21 July 1865

Hickok-Tutt shootout

Springfield, Missouri

The Wild West was a lawless place and it was often left for people to find their own justice. Several disagreements over unpaid gambling debts, a stolen watch and their mutual affection for the same women led Davis Tutt and James 'Wild Bill' Hickok to face off in Springfield town square on a hot summer morning in 1865. The two stood side-on to each other, drawing and firing their pistols at the same time – the first known quick-draw duel. Tutt's shot missed, but Hickok struck Tutt through the heart. Hickok was arrested and tried for murder but controversially acquitted after the jury found he acted in self-defence. The legend of Wild Bill was born.

18 December 1865

Thirteenth Amendment

Washington, DC

As long as the United States had existed it was split into states that outlawed slavery and states in which slavery was legal; the resulting tension within the country contributed to the outbreak of Civil War. At the end of the conflict, slavery was abolished throughout the nation by the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment. Areas in the west which had previously included slaves – Texas, New Mexico Territory and Utah Territory – now needed to manage the transition of hundreds of thousands of people from slavery to freedom. However, racial equality was still a long way off. Former slave states passed racist Black Codes which discriminated against freed blacks, and white supremacist organisations like the Ku Klux Klan used violence and intimidation in support of their twisted ideology.

13 February 1866

Brothers Jesse and Frank James commit their first armed bank robbery

Liberty, Missouri

4 March 1869

Civil War hero Ulysses Grant becomes president

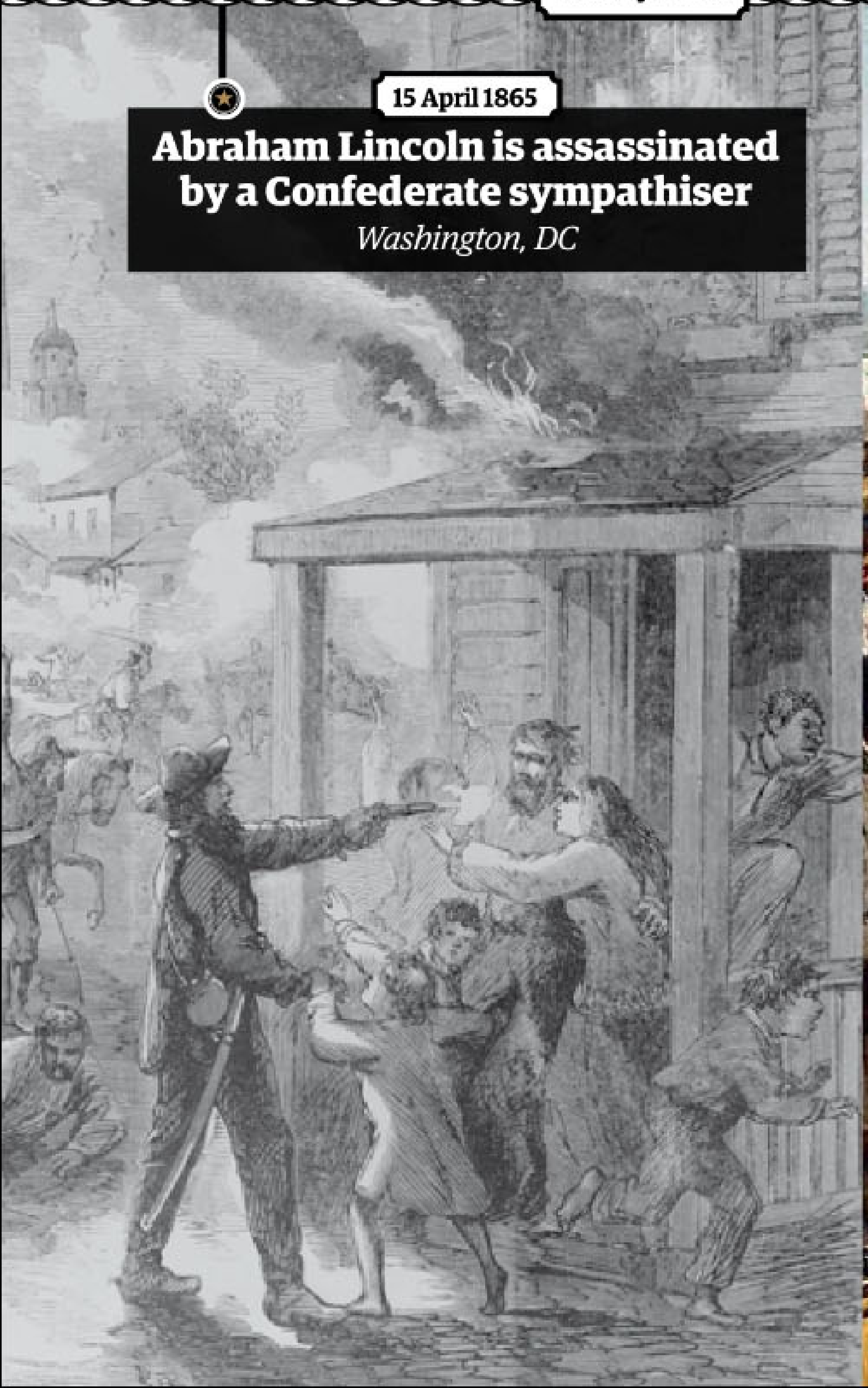
Washington, DC

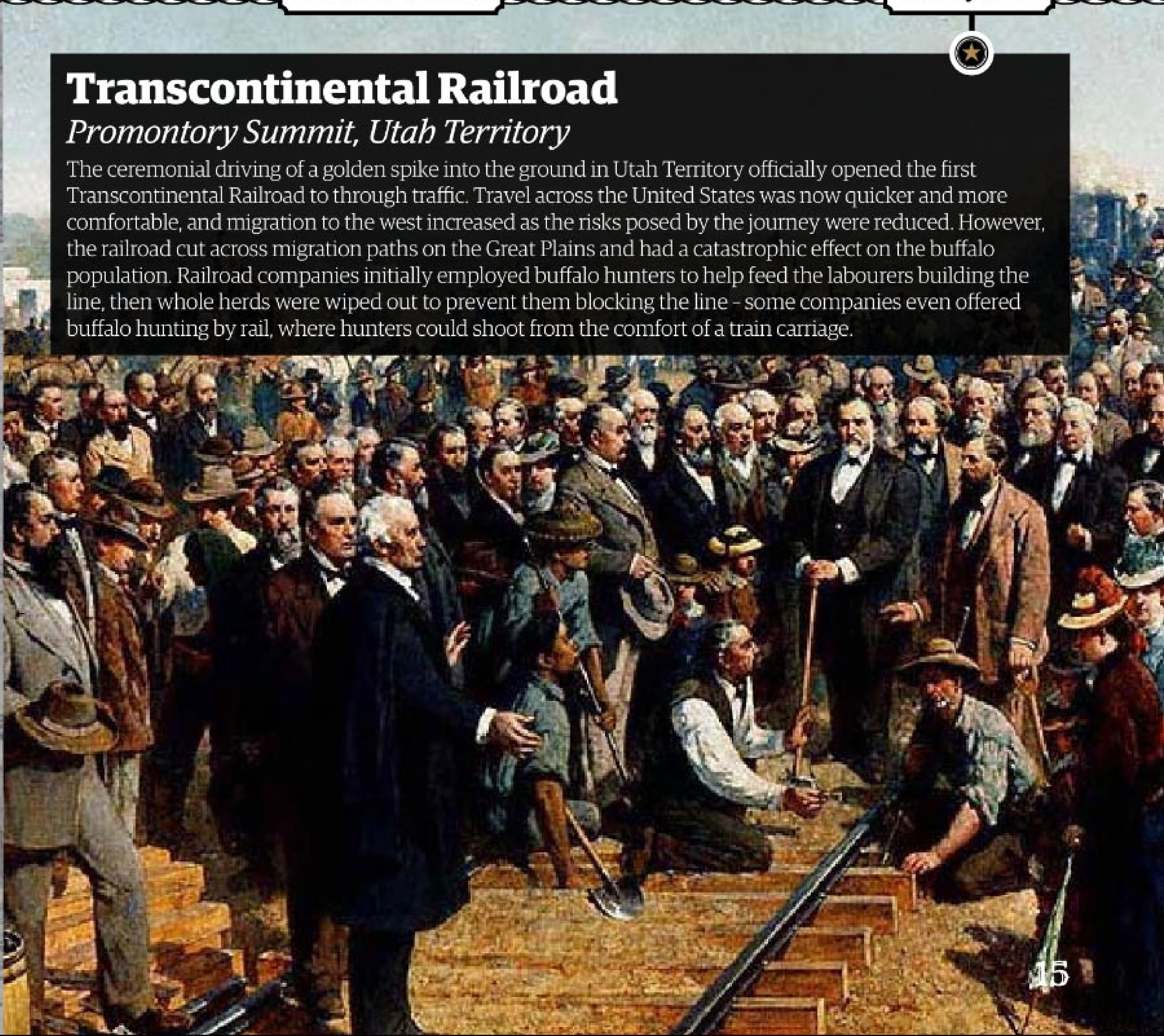
10 May 1869

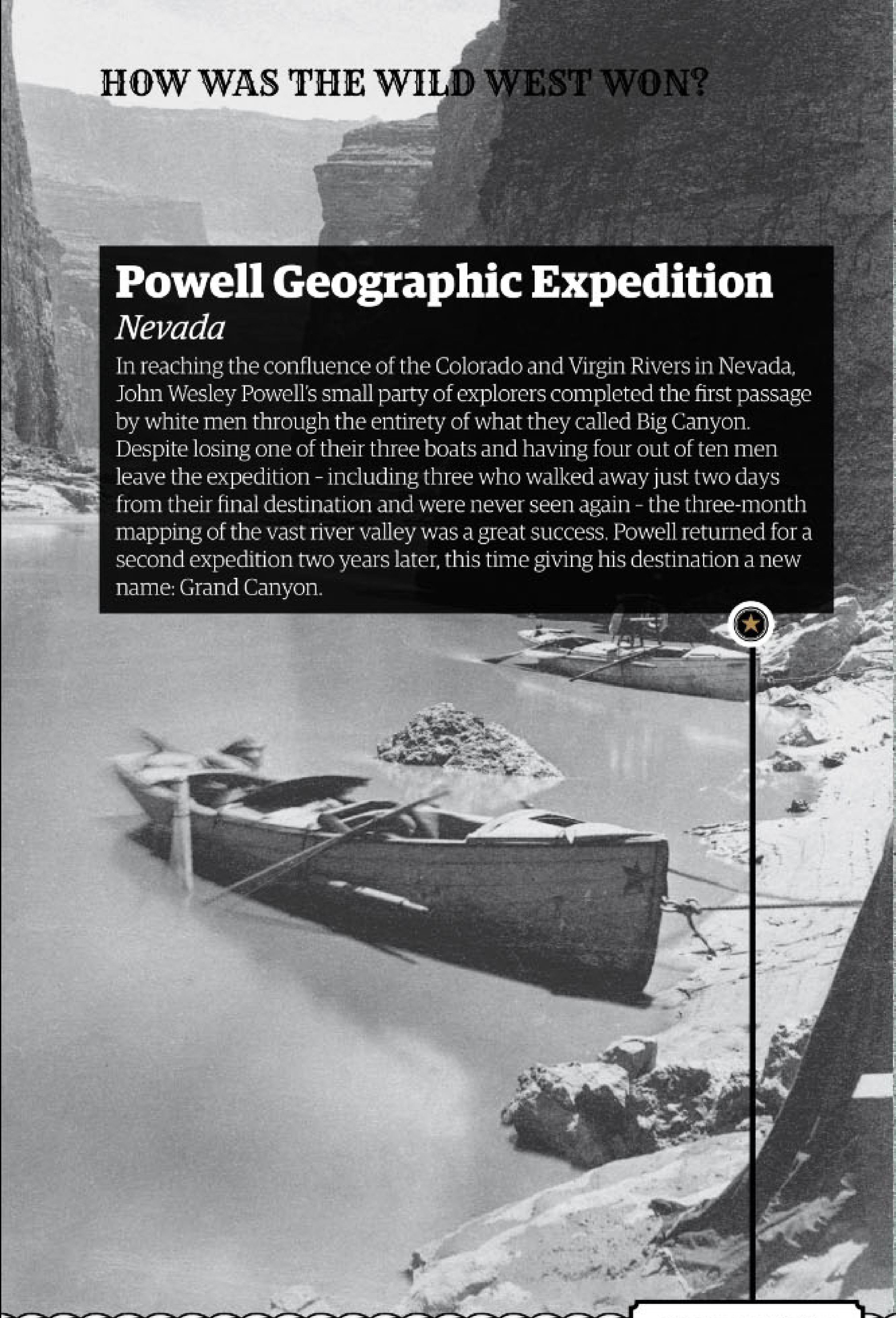
Transcontinental Railroad

Promontory Summit, Utah Territory

The ceremonial driving of a golden spike into the ground in Utah Territory officially opened the first Transcontinental Railroad to through traffic. Travel across the United States was now quicker and more comfortable, and migration to the west increased as the risks posed by the journey were reduced. However, the railroad cut across migration paths on the Great Plains and had a catastrophic effect on the buffalo population. Railroad companies initially employed buffalo hunters to help feed the labourers building the line, then whole herds were wiped out to prevent them blocking the line – some companies even offered buffalo hunting by rail, where hunters could shoot from the comfort of a train carriage.







Powell Geographic Expedition

Nevada

In reaching the confluence of the Colorado and Virgin Rivers in Nevada, John Wesley Powell's small party of explorers completed the first passage by white men through the entirety of what they called Big Canyon. Despite losing one of their three boats and having four out of ten men leave the expedition - including three who walked away just two days from their final destination and were never seen again - the three-month mapping of the vast river valley was a great success. Powell returned for a second expedition two years later, this time giving his destination a new name: Grand Canyon.

30 August 1869

Colt .45

Hartford, Connecticut

No self-respecting frontiersman would have left the house without his revolver, and more than any other the Colt .45 was the gun that won the west. The 'Peacemaker' became an instant favourite from its introduction in late 1873 due to its balance and ergonomic design and, by the end of the century, nearly 200,000 had been shipped to customers for $17 by mail order. The six-shooter was the preferred sidearm of gunmen on both sides of the law, including Wyatt Earp and Jesse James, and was used in some of the most notorious shootouts, battles, duels and murders of the Wild West.

1873

1 March 1872

Yellowstone National Park

Montana Territory and Wyoming Territory

President Ulysses Grant put his signature to an act of dedication in 1872 which made Yellowstone the first national park in the USA, and probably the world. Grant had been convinced by a number of vocal explorers and scientists, the most enthusiastic of whom was Ferdinand Hayden, that the headwaters of the Yellowstone River contained ecological treasures that should be protected by federal law. However, the creation of "a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" was not a universally popular measure - many locals feared that preventing Yellowstone being sold or settled would restrict the local economy. Even after the foundation of the national park, the region remained largely unexplored until a number of expeditions over the next two decades gradually revealed the wonders of Yellowstone to the American people. The chance to see the Old Faithful geyser and grizzly bears now draws 3.5 million visitors to Yellowstone every year.

December 1872

Buffalo Bill appears on stage for the first time

Chicago, Illinois

2 August 1876

Wild Bill Hickok is shot and killed while playing cards

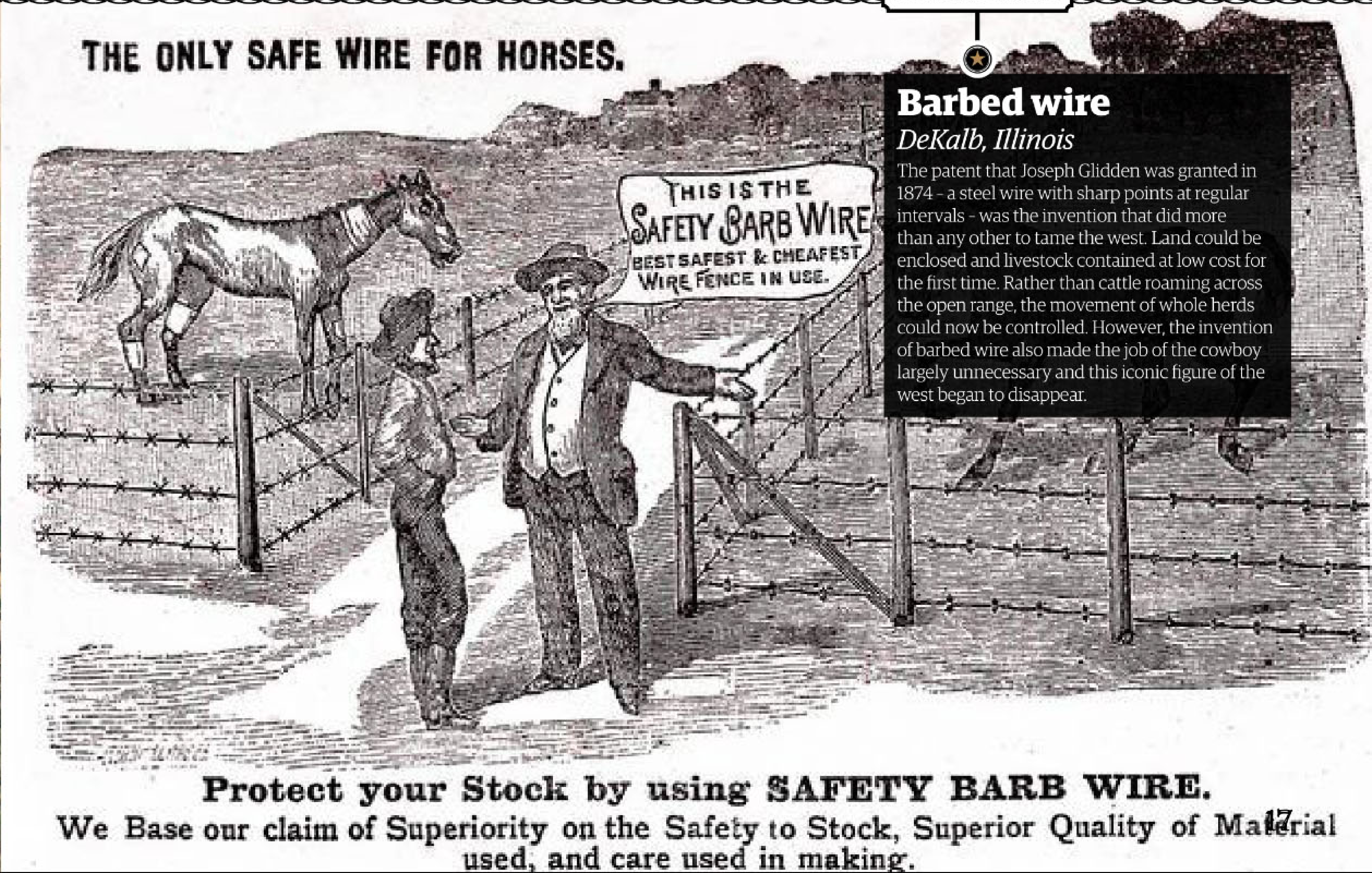
Deadwood, Dakota Territory

24 November 1874

Barbed wire

DeKalb, Illinois

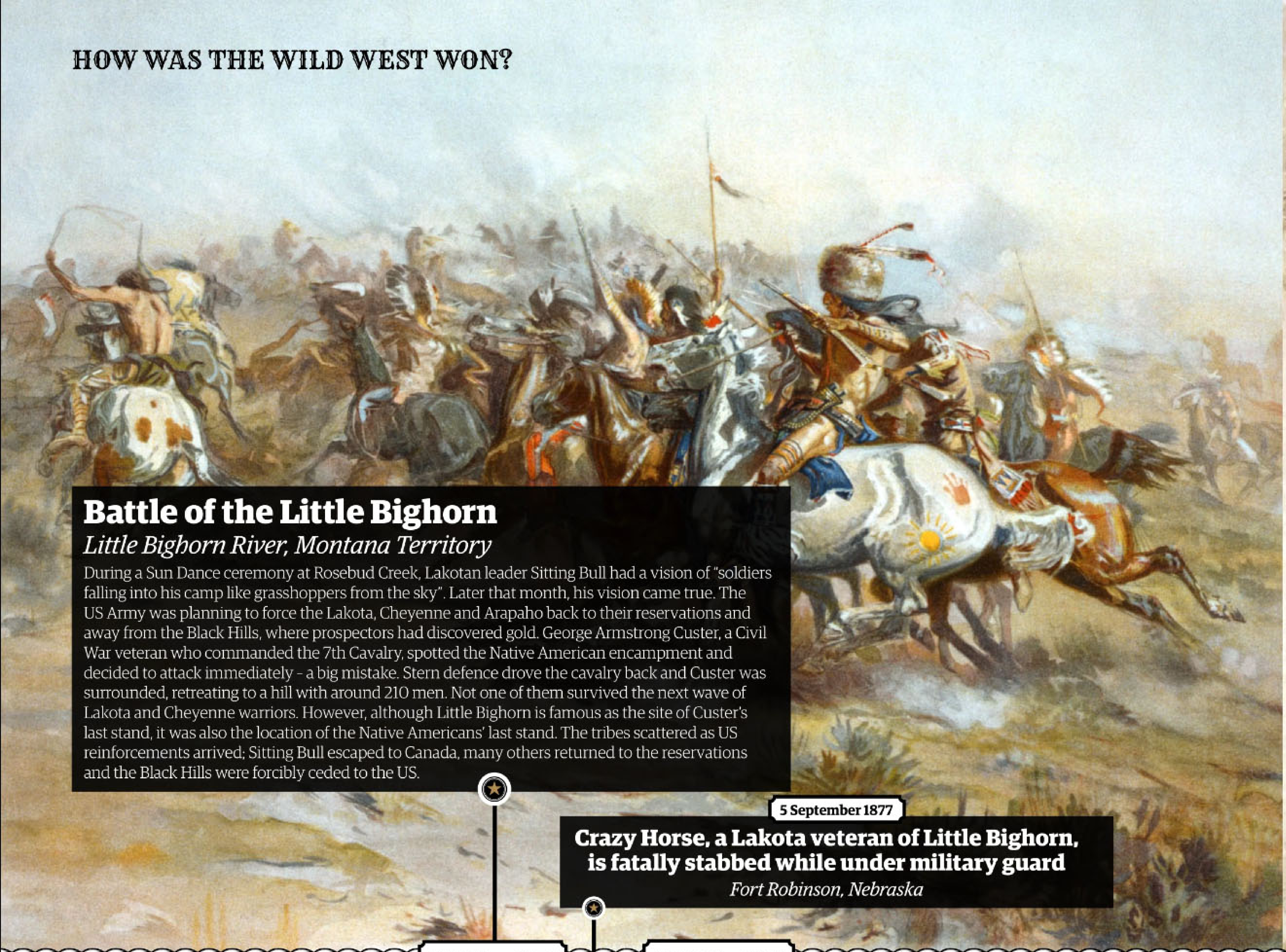
The patent that Joseph Glidden was granted in 1874 – a steel wire with sharp points at regular intervals – was the invention that did more than any other to tame the west. Land could be enclosed and livestock contained at low cost for the first time. Rather than cattle roaming across the open range, the movement of whole herds could now be controlled. However, the invention of barbed wire also made the job of the cowboy largely unnecessary and this iconic figure of the west began to disappear.

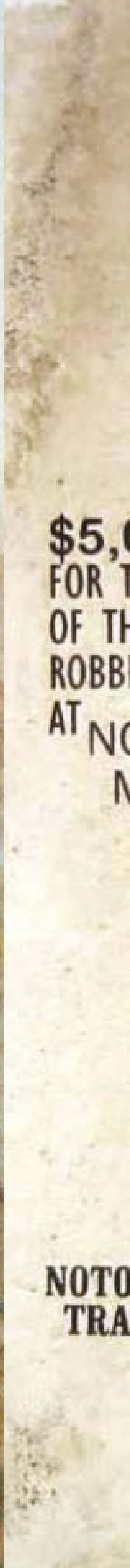


THE ONLY SAFE WIRE FOR HORSES.

Protect your Stock by using SAFETY BARB WIRE.

We Base our claim of Superiority on the Safety to Stock, Superior Quality of Material used, and care used in making.




$5,
FOR T
OF TH
ROBB
AT NO
N
NOTO
TRA

25-26 June 1876

Battle of the Little Bighorn

Little Bighorn River, Montana Territory

During a Sun Dance ceremony at Rosebud Creek, Lakotan leader Sitting Bull had a vision of "soldiers falling into his camp like grasshoppers from the sky". Later that month, his vision came true. The US Army was planning to force the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho back to their reservations and away from the Black Hills, where prospectors had discovered gold. George Armstrong Custer, a Civil War veteran who commanded the 7th Cavalry, spotted the Native American encampment and decided to attack immediately – a big mistake. Stern defence drove the cavalry back and Custer was surrounded, retreating to a hill with around 210 men. Not one of them survived the next wave of Lakota and Cheyenne warriors. However, although Little Bighorn is famous as the site of Custer's last stand, it was also the location of the Native Americans' last stand. The tribes scattered as US reinforcements arrived; Sitting Bull escaped to Canada, many others returned to the reservations and the Black Hills were forcibly ceded to the US.

5 September 1877

Crazy Horse, a Lakota veteran of Little Bighorn, is fatally stabbed while under military guard

Fort Robinson, Nebraska

28 April 1881

Billy the Kid escapes from prison, where he is awaiting execution

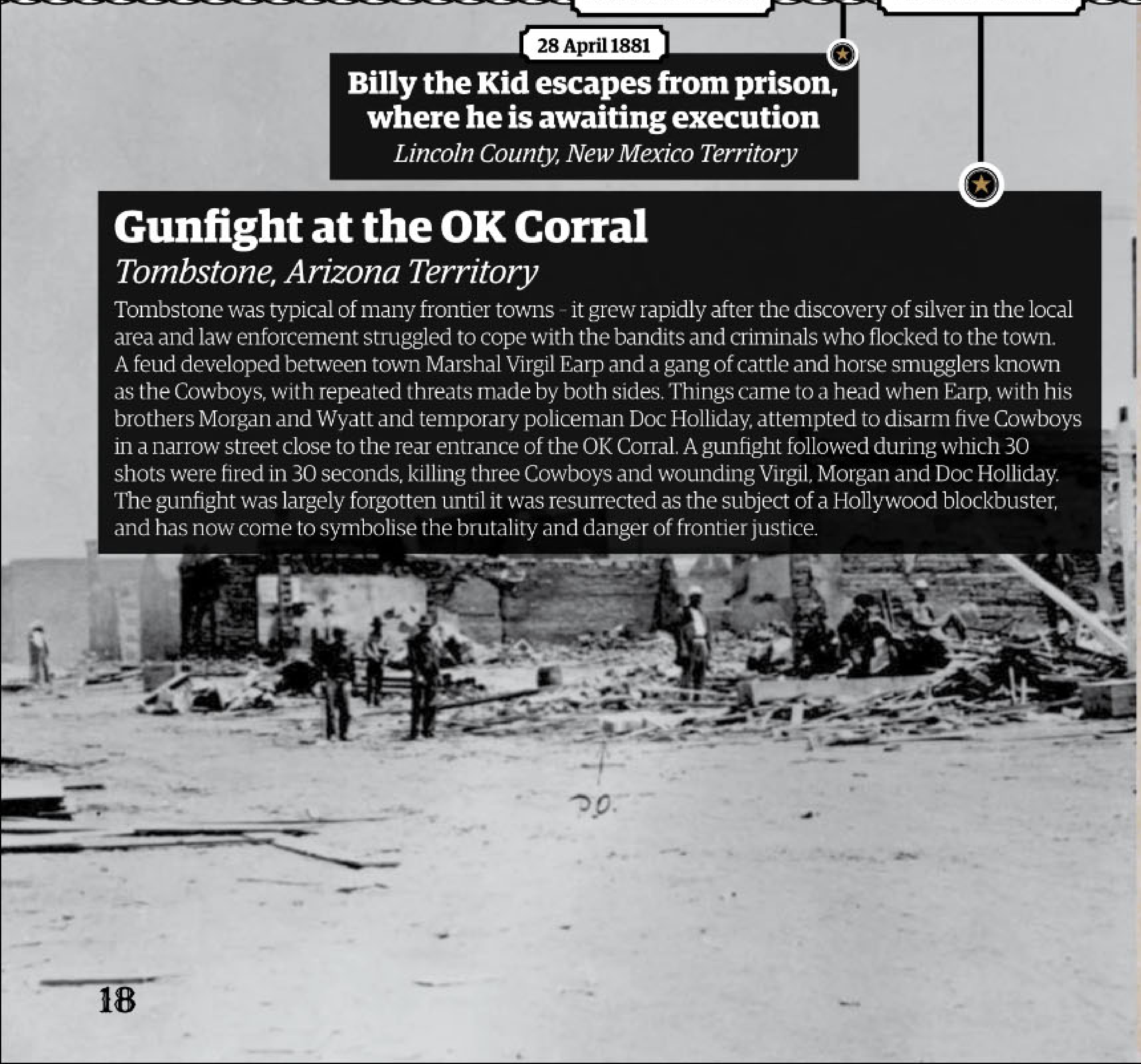
Lincoln County, New Mexico Territory

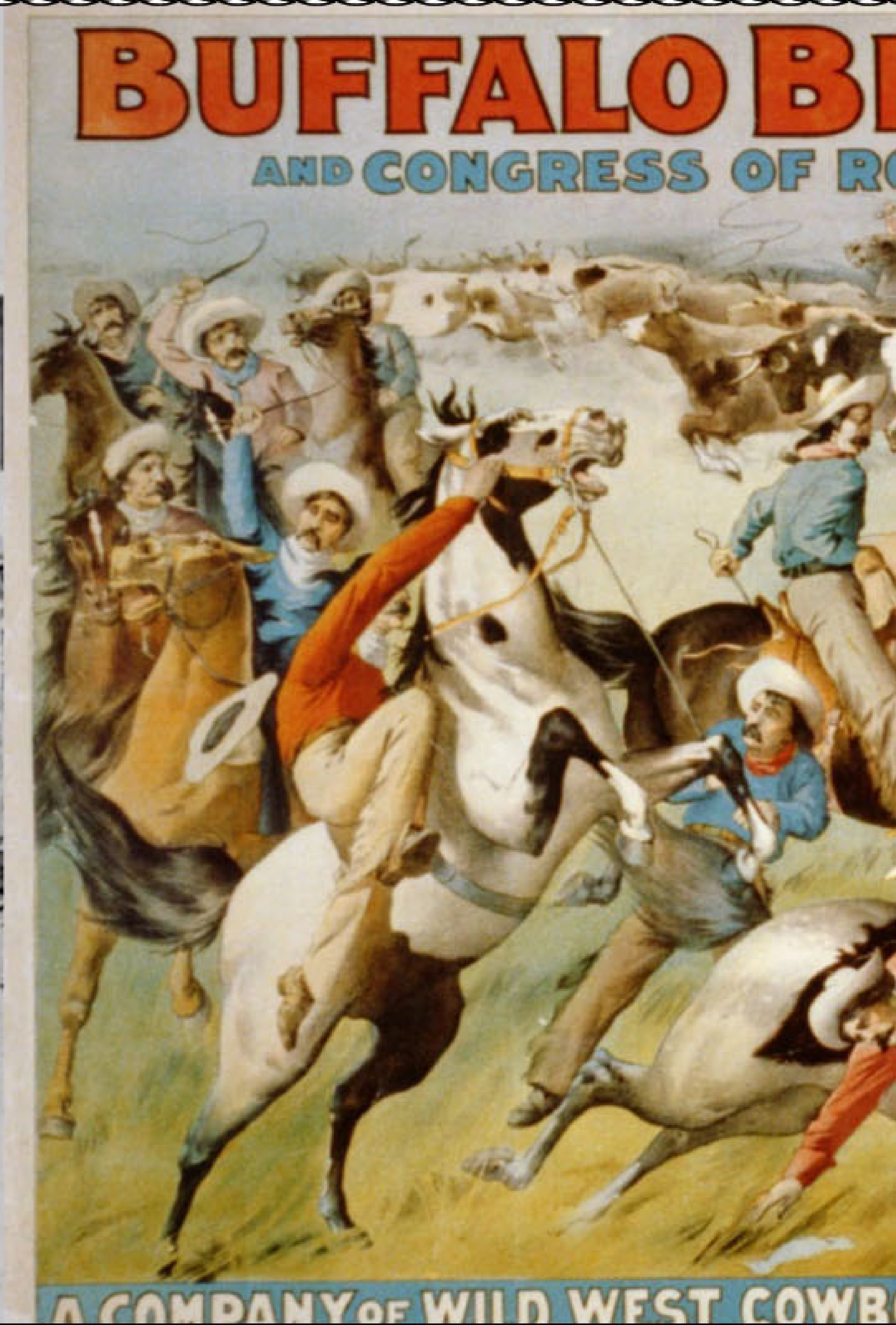
26 October 1881

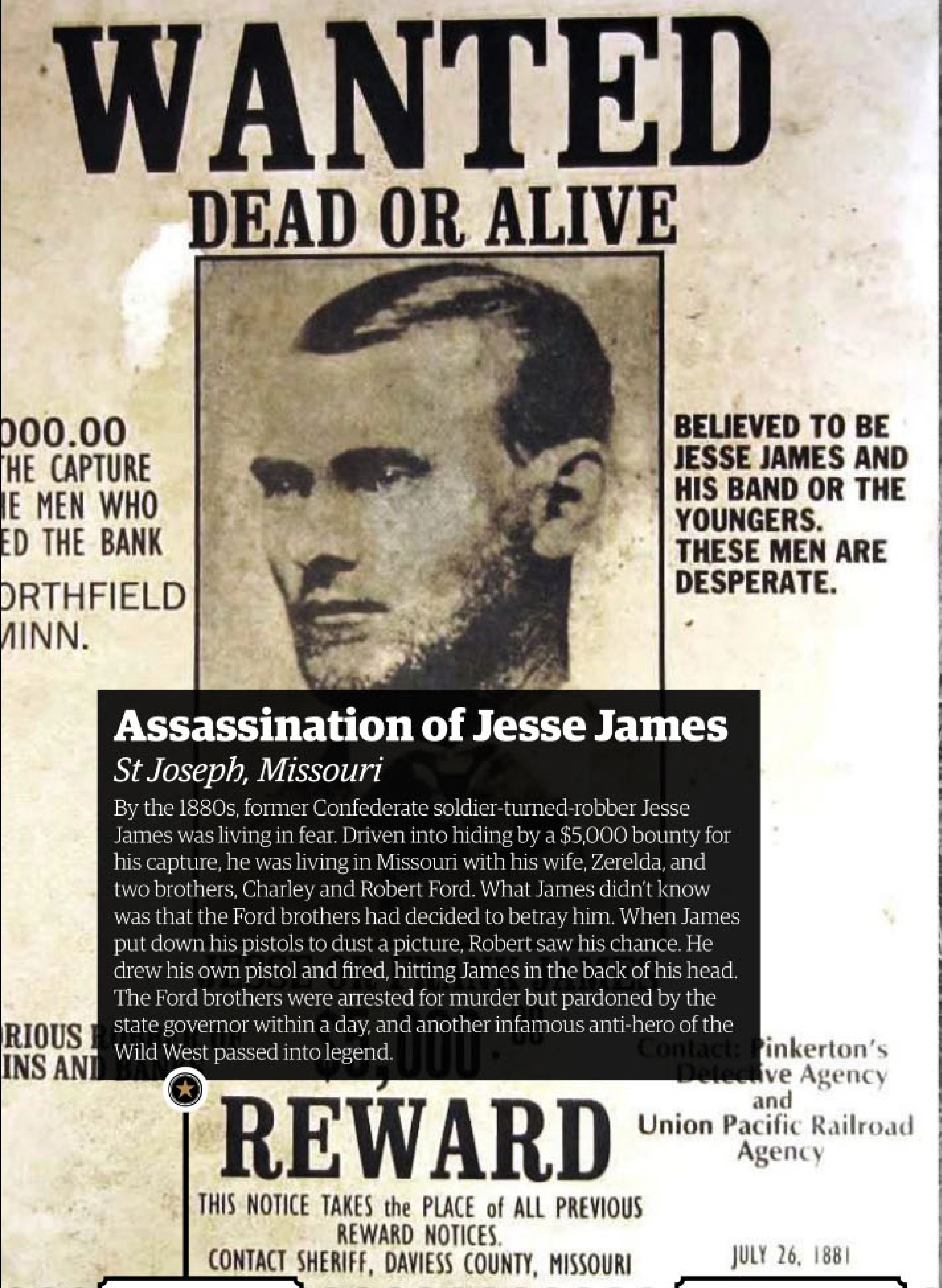
Gunfight at the OK Corral

Tombstone, Arizona Territory

Tombstone was typical of many frontier towns – it grew rapidly after the discovery of silver in the local area and law enforcement struggled to cope with the bandits and criminals who flocked to the town. A feud developed between town Marshal Virgil Earp and a gang of cattle and horse smugglers known as the Cowboys, with repeated threats made by both sides. Things came to a head when Earp, with his brothers Morgan and Wyatt and temporary policeman Doc Holliday, attempted to disarm five Cowboys in a narrow street close to the rear entrance of the OK Corral. A gunfight followed during which 30 shots were fired in 30 seconds, killing three Cowboys and wounding Virgil, Morgan and Doc Holliday. The gunfight was largely forgotten until it was resurrected as the subject of a Hollywood blockbuster, and has now come to symbolise the brutality and danger of frontier justice.





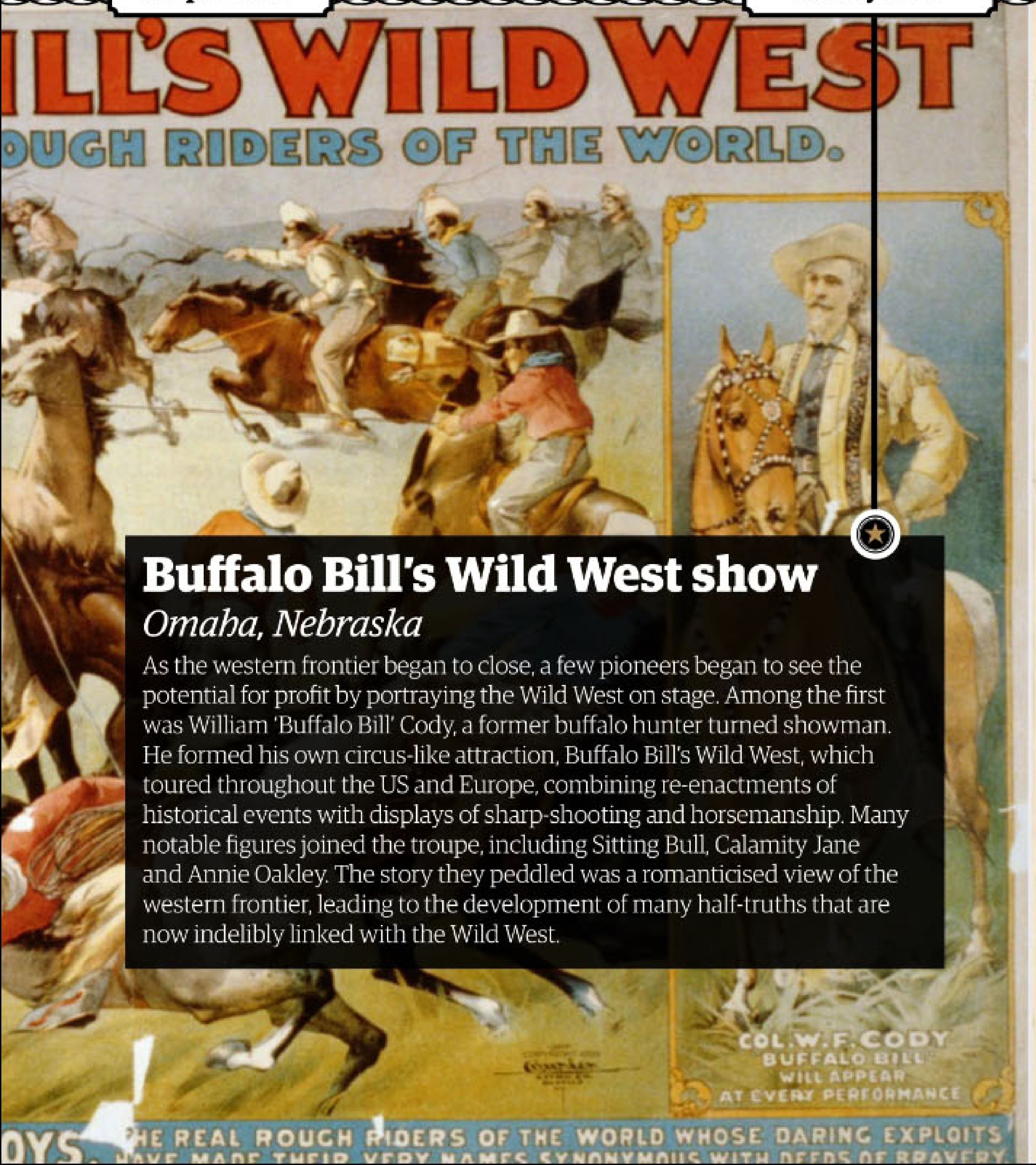

WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE
000.00
THE CAPTURE
E MEN WHO
ED THE BANK
ORTHFIELD
MINN.
BELIEVED TO BE JESSE JAMES AND HIS BAND OR THE YOUNGERS. THESE MEN ARE DESPERATE.
RIOUS
INS AN
Contact: Pinkerton's Detective Agency and Union Pacific Railroad Agency
REWARD
THIS NOTICE TAKES the PLACE of ALL PREVIOUS REWARD NOTICES.
CONTACT SHERIFF, DAVIESS COUNTY, MISSOURI
JULY 26, 1881

Assassination of Jesse James

St Joseph, Missouri

By the 1880s, former Confederate soldier-turned-robber Jesse James was living in fear. Driven into hiding by a $5,000 bounty for his capture, he was living in Missouri with his wife, Zerelda, and two brothers, Charley and Robert Ford. What James didn't know was that the Ford brothers had decided to betray him. When James put down his pistols to dust a picture, Robert saw his chance. He drew his own pistol and fired, hitting James in the back of his head. The Ford brothers were arrested for murder but pardoned by the state governor within a day, and another infamous anti-hero of the Wild West passed into legend.

3 April 1882

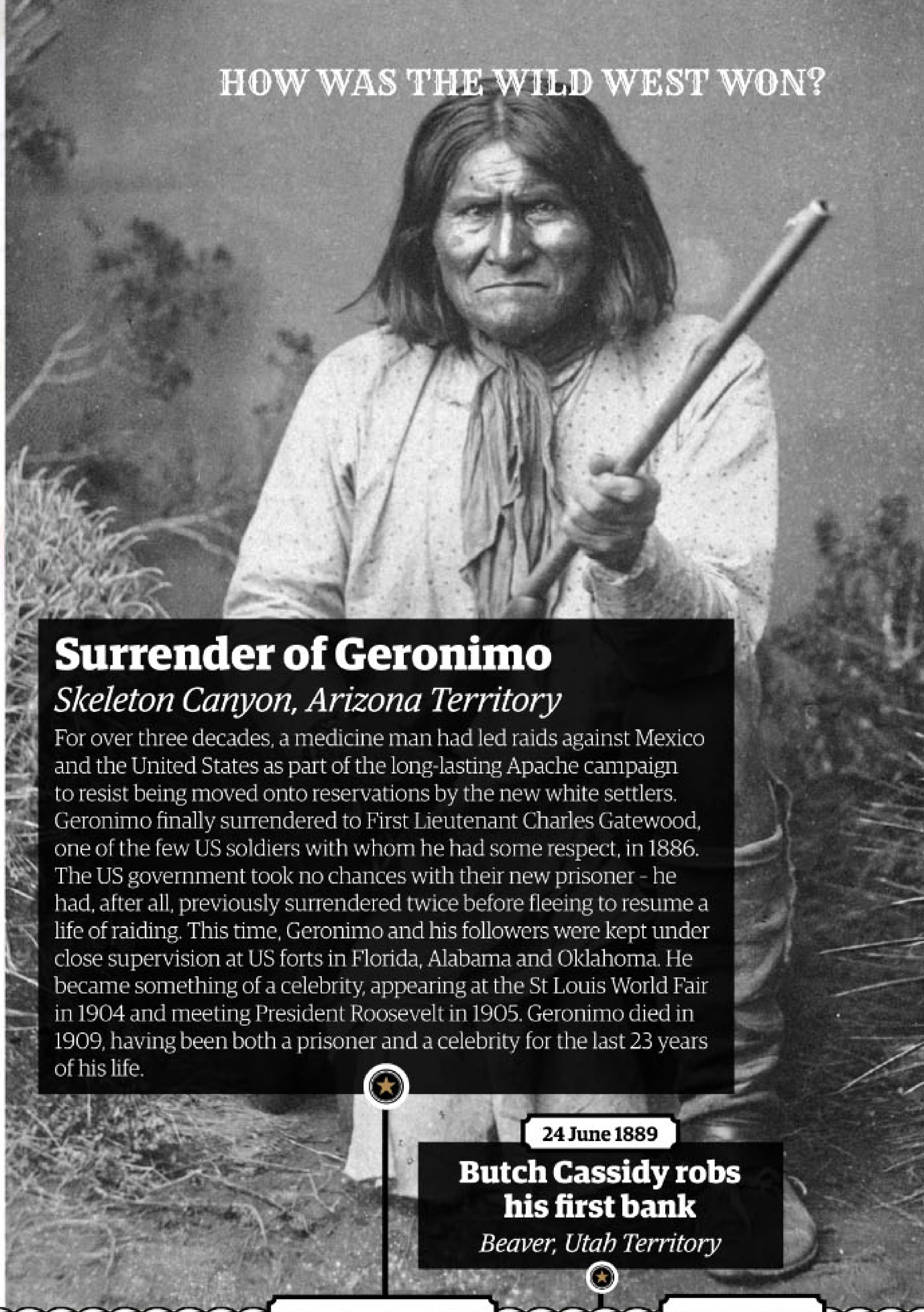

ILL'S WILD WEST
OUGH RIDERS OF THE WORLD.
COL. W. F. CODY BUFFALO BILL WILL APPEAR AT EVERY PERFORMANCE
OYS. THE REAL ROUGH RIDERS OF THE WORLD WHOSE DARING EXPLOITS HAVE MADE THEIR VERY NAMES SYNONYMOUS WITH DEEDS OF BRAVERY

19 May 1883

Buffalo Bill's Wild West show

Omaha, Nebraska

As the western frontier began to close, a few pioneers began to see the potential for profit by portraying the Wild West on stage. Among the first was William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody, a former buffalo hunter turned showman. He formed his own circus-like attraction, Buffalo Bill's Wild West, which toured throughout the US and Europe, combining re-enactments of historical events with displays of sharp-shooting and horsemanship. Many notable figures joined the troupe, including Sitting Bull, Calamity Jane and Annie Oakley. The story they peddled was a romanticised view of the western frontier, leading to the development of many half-truths that are now indelibly linked with the Wild West.



Surrender of Geronimo

Skeleton Canyon, Arizona Territory

For over three decades, a medicine man had led raids against Mexico and the United States as part of the long-lasting Apache campaign to resist being moved onto reservations by the new white settlers. Geronimo finally surrendered to First Lieutenant Charles Gatewood, one of the few US soldiers with whom he had some respect, in 1886. The US government took no chances with their new prisoner – he had, after all, previously surrendered twice before fleeing to resume a life of raiding. This time, Geronimo and his followers were kept under close supervision at US forts in Florida, Alabama and Oklahoma. He became something of a celebrity, appearing at the St Louis World Fair in 1904 and meeting President Roosevelt in 1905. Geronimo died in 1909, having been both a prisoner and a celebrity for the last 23 years of his life.

4 September 1886

7 March 1888

William Temple Hornaday estimates that there are fewer than 300 buffalo left in the wild

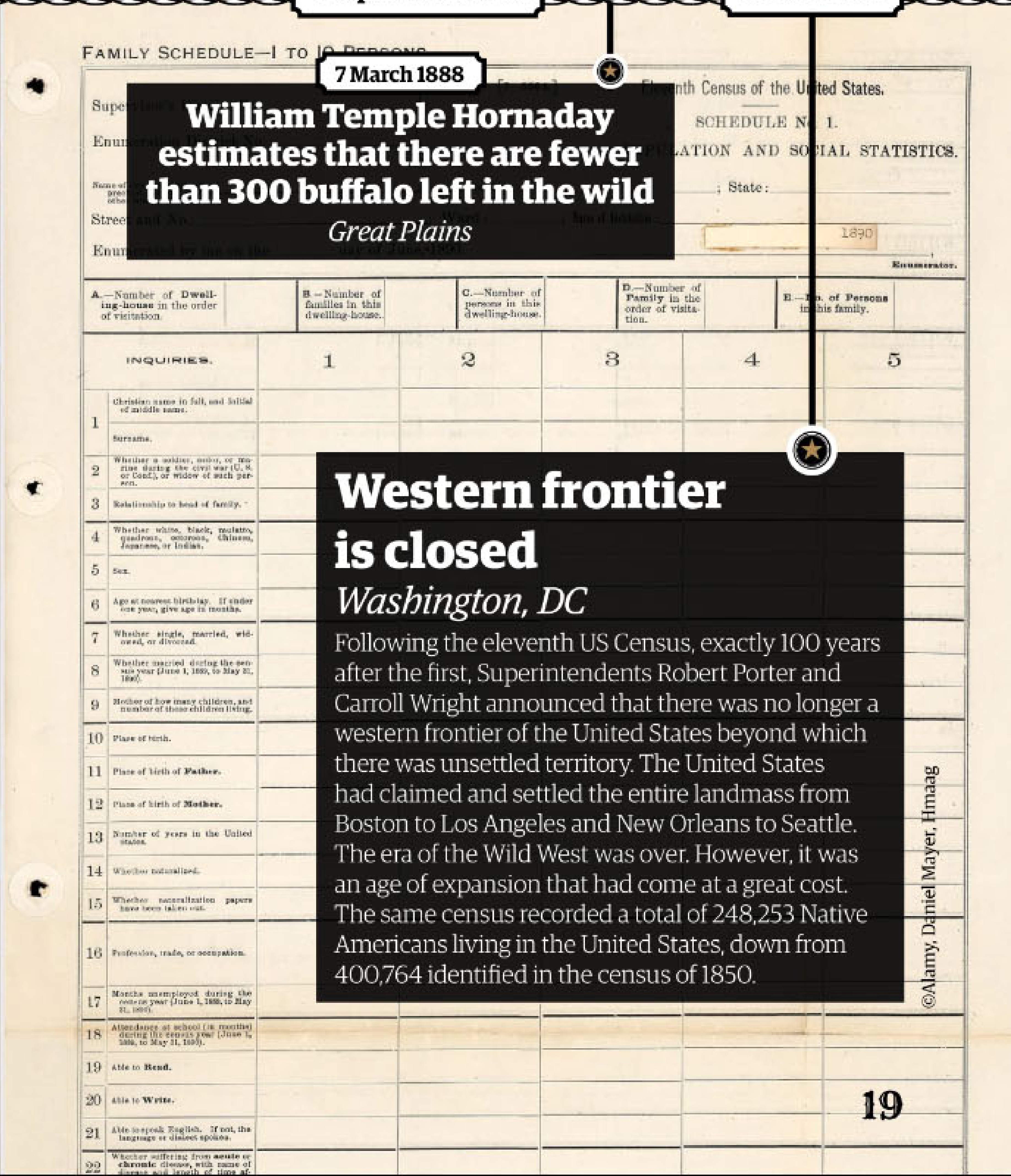
Great Plains

24 June 1889

Butch Cassidy robs his first bank

Beaver, Utah Territory

2 June 1890


FAMILY SCHEDULE—I TO 10 PERSONS.
nth Census of the U ted States.
SCHEDULE N 1.
LATION AND SO IAL STATISTICS.
INQUIRIES.
1
2
3
4
5

Western frontier is closed

Washington, DC

Following the eleventh US Census, exactly 100 years after the first, Superintendents Robert Porter and Carroll Wright announced that there was no longer a western frontier of the United States beyond which there was unsettled territory. The United States had claimed and settled the entire landmass from Boston to Los Angeles and New Orleans to Seattle. The era of the Wild West was over. However, it was an age of expansion that had come at a great cost. The same census recorded a total of 248,253 Native Americans living in the United States, down from 400,764 identified in the census of 1850.

©Alamy, Daniel Mayer, Hmaag

DISCOVERING THE AMERICAN WEST

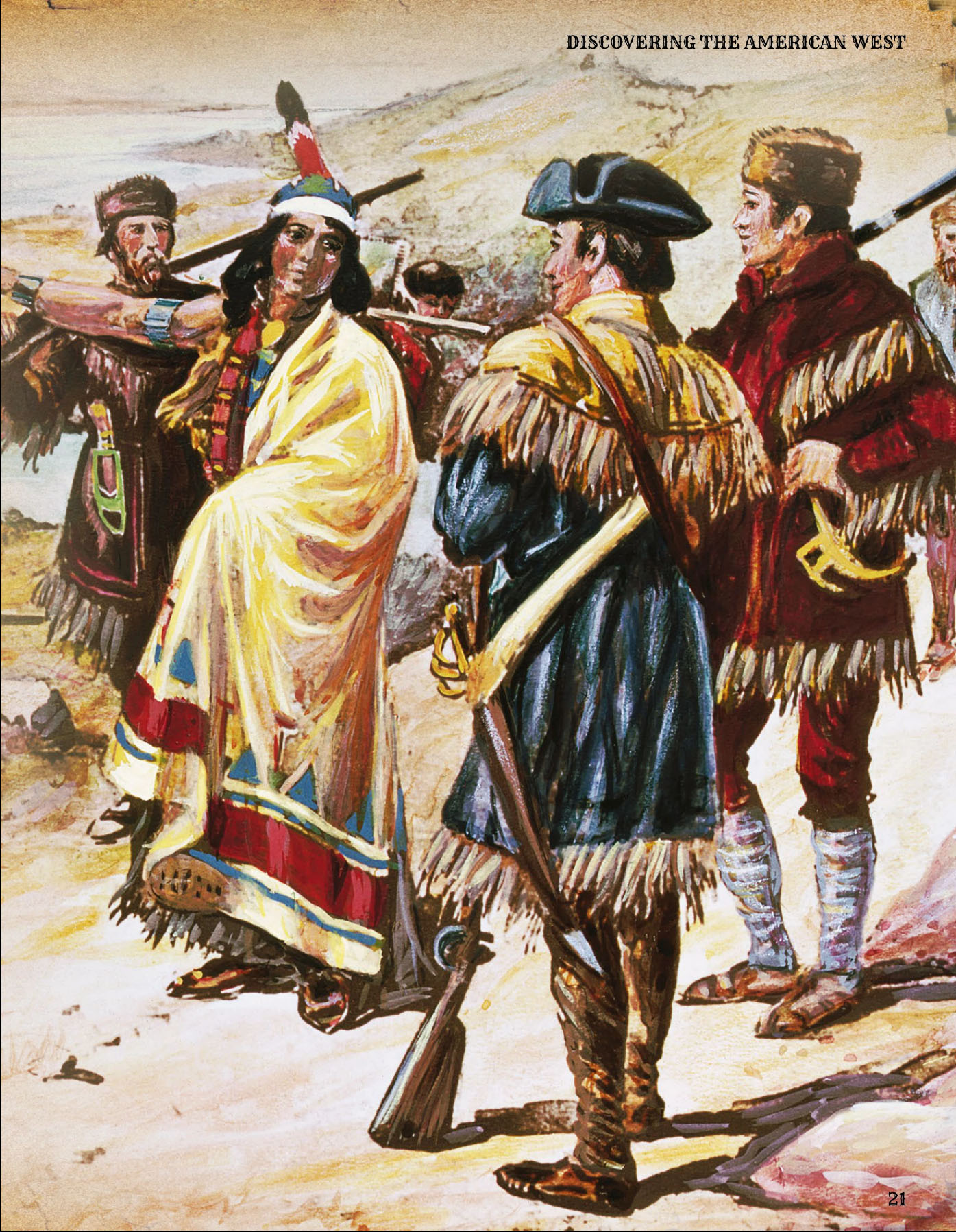
They ventured across the country through unknown terrain, facing danger and discovery at every turn. This is the journey of Lewis and Clark

When the Revolutionary war ended in 1783, the founding fathers had grand ideals of what the vast continent had to offer, but little notion of its sprawling landscape and what lived there. It was an incredible wilderness full of possibilities and dangers, from which Meriwether Lewis and William Clark had no guarantee of a safe return.

The shape of the young American nation would change drastically when Napoleon Bonaparte offered to sell the French territory of Louisiana, a colossal area of 2,144,500 square kilometres that would double the size of the USA. President Thomas Jefferson worked quickly to negotiate the Louisiana Purchase for $15 million in 1803, and he knew exactly what he wanted from it. He was desperate to know if there was a Northwest Passage that would connect the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean, thus greatly increasing trading possibilities, and he had secretly asked Congress to approve and fund the expedition six months before the purchase was officially announced.

The president already had the perfect leader for the expedition. Jefferson's secretary, Meriwether Lewis, was a military veteran in excellent physical shape with a keen interest in the study of wildlife, and his loyalty and dedication were unquestionable. Lewis immediately began to prepare, taking lessons in navigation and absorbing every piece of available information about the geography and people of the region. However, even with all his study, he knew there would be myriad surprises ahead.

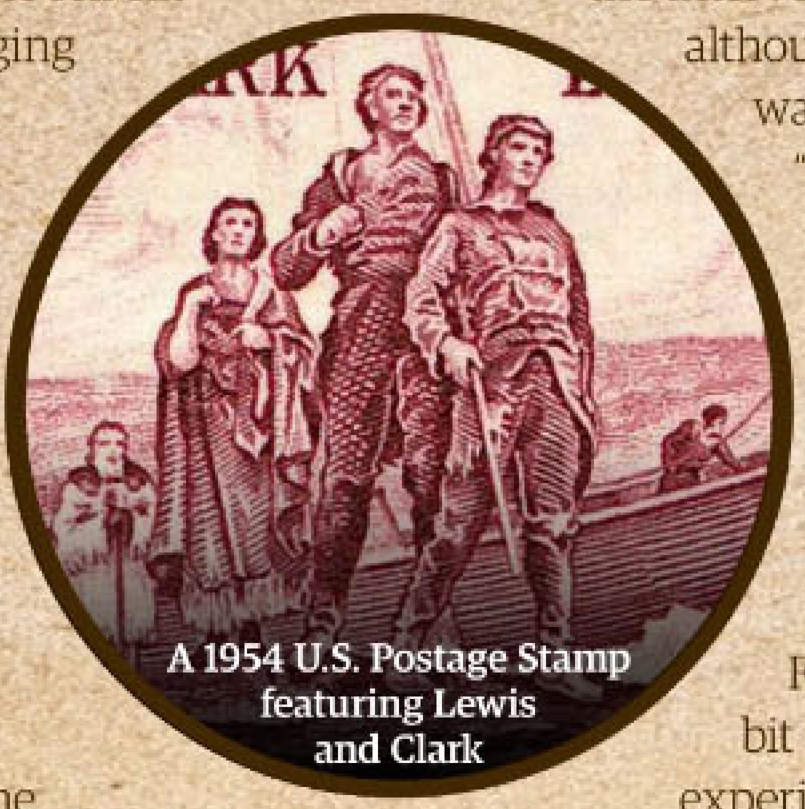
Lewis invited his former commanding officer, William Clark, to join him as co-captain, a move that partly stemmed from the diplomatic aspect of the voyage. They would be the ones to convey to the many Native American tribes on their way westward that they were now living under new



masters – a difficult conversation they hoped would be smoothed over with gifts, including a specially minted coin and some demonstrations of superior firepower. Clark's experience as a soldier and frontiersman combined with Lewis's strong leadership and diplomacy made them the perfect match, and he readily agreed.

Lewis sailed the newly constructed narrowboat from Pittsburgh down the Ohio River, and he met with Clark near Louisville, Kentucky, before setting up their winter training camp on Wood River. There would be 33 core members of the Corps of Discovery, which would finally set out on 14 May 1804 on the Missouri River.

The voyage did not get off to the best start. Discipline was occasionally poor, and on 17 May, three men were court-martialled for being absent without leave. Meanwhile, Lewis was given his own warning on 23 May, when he fell six metres from a cliff before managing to stop his fall with his knife, just barely saving his own life. There was no margin for error, and the brooding, solitary Lewis was reminded that wandering alone was a dangerous habit. Of course, that would not stop him.


A 1954 U.S. Postage Stamp featuring Lewis and Clark

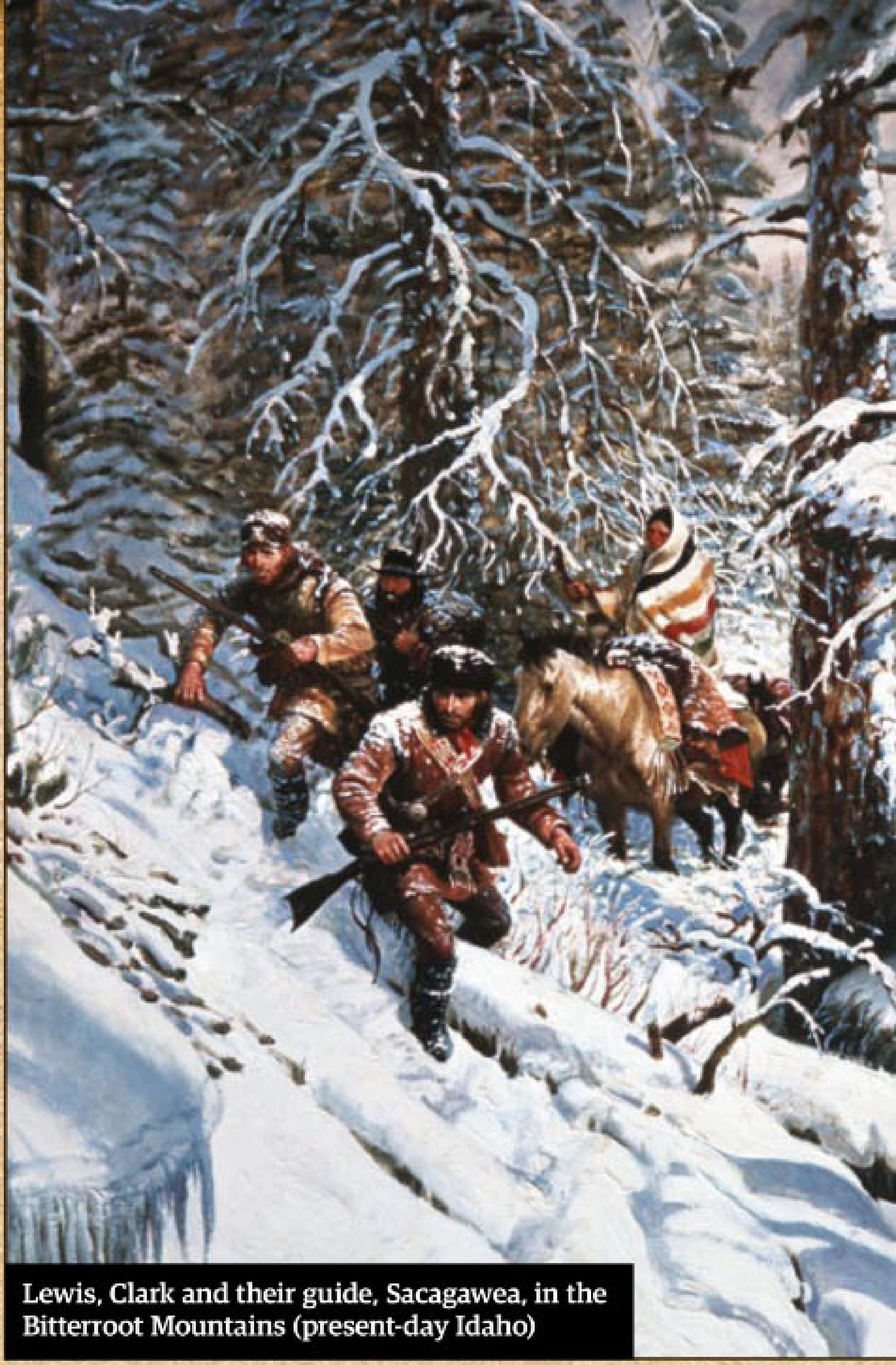
The weather was fine, but it was hard going, with the fierce Missouri River frequently needing to be cleared to allow the boats free passage, and mosquitoes, ticks and illness proving to be a growing problem. It was during this summer that the expedition suffered its only fatality, when Sergeant Charles Floyd died of appendicitis. However, Lewis's journeys into the woods provided them with an abundance of new discoveries. A meeting with the Oto and Missouri Native Americans on 3 August went very well, with speeches and exchanges of gifts getting the reception Lewis and Clark had hoped for.

Another successful meeting was held on 30 August, this time with the Yankton Sioux, and the Corps of Discovery entered the Great Plains in early September. It was here that the natural history aspect of the mission really began, as never-before-seen animals roamed. Beasts that seem archetypally American today (elk, bison, coyotes and antelope, for example) were a new discovery by these awe-struck men from the east. But the animals weren't the only ones who called this land home, and the expedition was about to be reminded that, to some, they were trespassing.

Although every encounter with Native American tribes had been peaceful so far, tensions quickly ran high when they met the Teton Sioux (now known as the Lakota Sioux) near what is now South Dakota, in September. The travellers had been warned that this tribe could be unfriendly, and it seemed that conflict was inevitable following a series of difficult meetings and demands for one of their boats. Crisis was averted thanks to the intervention of their chief, Black Buffalo, although Clark's diaries show that all was not forgiven, referring to them as, "vile miscreants of the savage race."

They travelled on northwards, reaching the Mandan settlements (a heavily populated area with more people calling it home than Washington DC at the time) at the end of October. Quickly, they began work on their winter camp, Fort Mandan, as the cold weather bit harder than the men had ever experienced. It was here that they made one of the most important decisions of their voyage. They hired the French-Canadian Toussaint Charbonneau, a fur trader, and his 16-year-old Shoshone wife Sacagawea as interpreters. Lewis and Clark were heading to the mountains, and although they had no idea quite how colossal the range was, they knew they would need horses. Native speakers would be invaluable for trade as well as safe passage. Sacagawea gave birth to her son, Jean Baptiste (nicknamed Pomp by Clark), during the winter, and many credit this woman and her child accompanying the travellers with being the reason they were treated so hospitably by tribes they met on the rest of the journey.

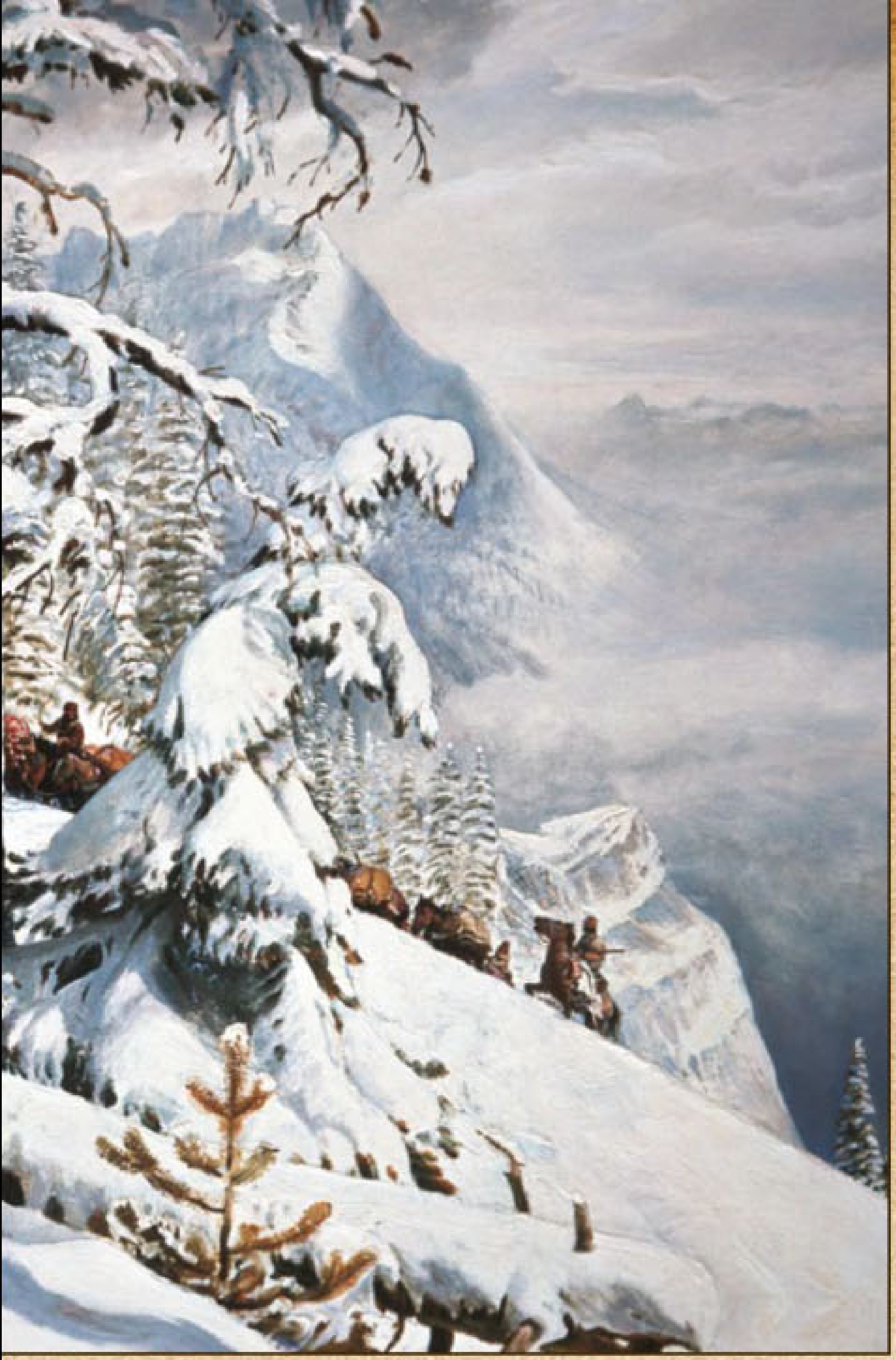
Lewis and Clark's journey westward would lead them along the Missouri River

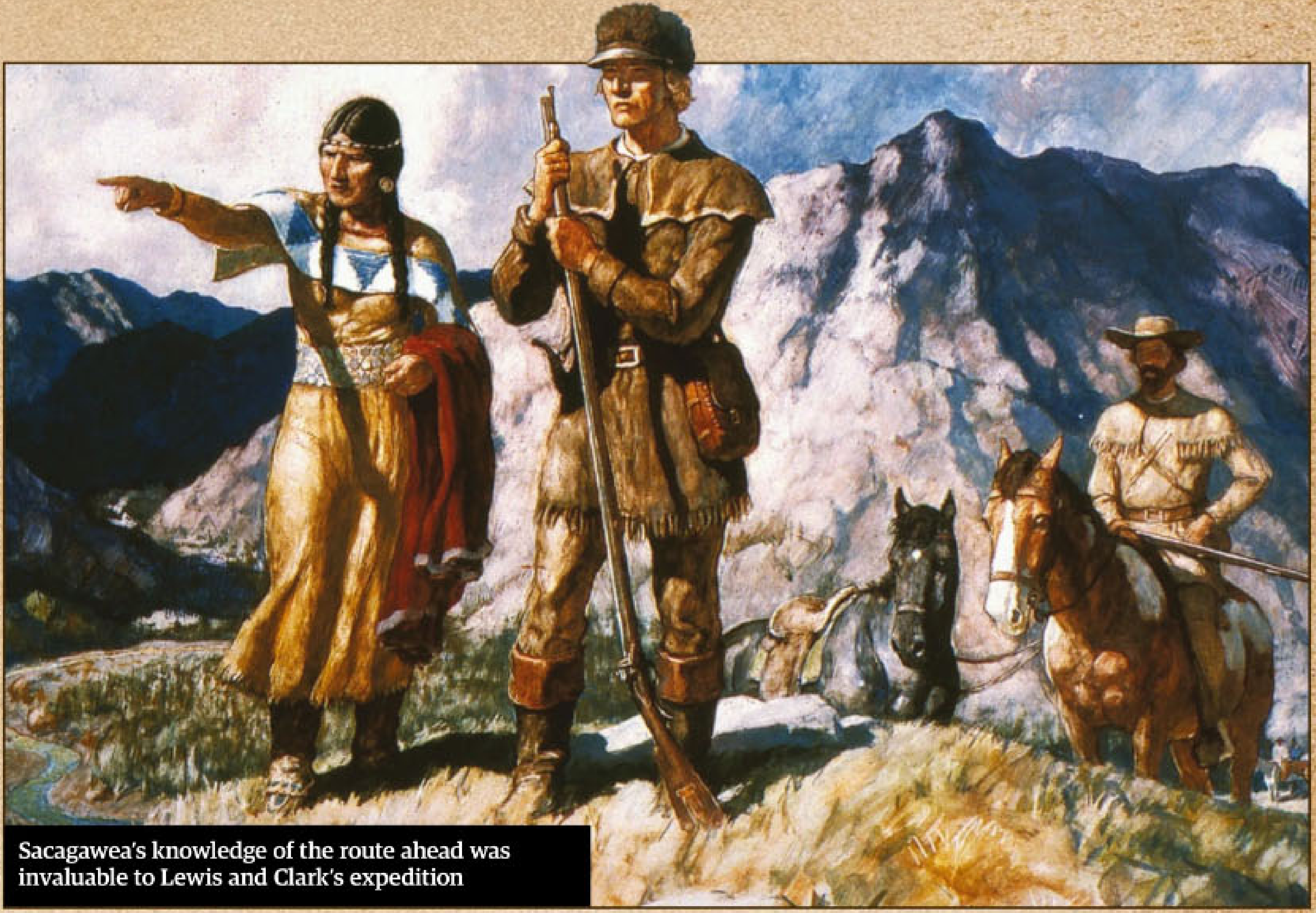

Lewis, Clark and their guide, Sacagawea, in the Bitterroot Mountains (present-day Idaho)

Having sent a small group back to St Louis with samples of their findings, the Corps of Discovery set out again on 7 April. They made excellent time through unexplored country, and it became clear that bringing Sacagawea was a wise decision indeed. Not only did she help them to forage, showing them what was edible and what wasn't, she also had the presence of mind to rescue important papers when a boat capsized. Then, at the start of June, everything nearly fell apart. They had reached a fork in the Missouri River, and Lewis and Clark had to make a choice. If they chose poorly, they would be taken completely off course, and it was an incredible relief when they reached the waterfalls they had been told they would find if they were on the right track. However, the right track was not an easy path to take, and the Great Falls were another colossal challenge. There was a constant threat from bears and rattlesnakes, and several crewmembers were ill.

They would have to go the long way around, 29 kilometres over difficult terrain, carrying everything that they needed. There was no way back. Incredibly, the crew pulled together and accomplished this amazing feat. It's a testament to the spirit of these men, their awareness of the importance of their mission and the leadership of Lewis and Clark that the only thing lost on this brutal detour was time, and the dream of Lewis's iron-framed boat, which simply did not work.

Time, of course, was of the essence. Despite making the right choice at a second set of forks, winter was coming and there were still mountains to climb. They needed to reach the Shoshone tribe and trade for horses if they were to have any hope of reaching their goal, and as they grew closer, Sacagawea helped to navigate through the territory of her youth. However, finding the tribe proved to be difficult, and Lewis and a scout broke off from





Sacagawea's knowledge of the route ahead was invaluable to Lewis and Clark's expedition

"They had reached a fork in the Missouri River, and Lewis and Clark had to make a choice. If they chose poorly, they would be taken completely off course"

the group while Clark continued with the rest of the party up the river. Another crushing blow was delivered when Lewis saw the full extent of the mountains they would have to cross. There was no Northwest Passage through the Rocky Mountains.

Finally, they found the Shoshone, who had never seen anyone like these strangers before. Sacagawea acted as an interpreter, and, while speaking, realised that the tribe's chief, Cameahwait, was her brother. This amazing stroke of luck secured the horses needed for their mountain crossing, after two weeks resting at the Shoshone camp.

In September, they began their mountain crossing at the Bitterroot Range with a Shoshone guide named Old Toby. The weather was against them, Toby lost his way for a while, and the group faced the very real possibility of starvation over two agonising weeks. They finally found their way to the settlement of the Nez Perce on 23 September, who decided to spare the lives of these wretched, starving travellers. In fact, they were incredibly hospitable, sheltering them for two weeks and even teaching them a new way to build canoes. Their first downstream journey may have seemed like a blessed relief, but the rapids were fantastically dangerous, and they were watched with great interest as they made their way down the perilous waters. Once again, they overcame the odds.

On 7 November, Clark was convinced that he could see the Pacific, writing, "Ocean in view! O! The Joy... This great Pacific Ocean which we have been so long anxious to see. And the roaring or noise made by the waves breaking on the rocky shores (as I suppose) may be heard distinctly." He was sadly mistaken. They were 32 kilometres away, and it would take more than a week in bad weather to reach Cape Disappointment on 18 November. Clark wrote that the, "...men appear much satisfied with their trip, beholding with astonishment the high waves dashing against the rocks and this immense ocean." They had reached the Pacific; their mission was accomplished. Lewis and Clark decided to take a vote on where to build their winter camp, which is believed to be the first time in recorded US history that a slave (York) and a woman (Sacagawea) were allowed to vote. The winter was tough, as endless rain dampened their spirits, but in March they set out to return, using Clark's updated map. Their journey home may have been shorter (a mere six months), but had its own dangers, including a violent encounter with Blackfeet Indians that resulted in two killings. They finally arrived in St Louis on 23 September 1806, almost two and a half years after setting off.

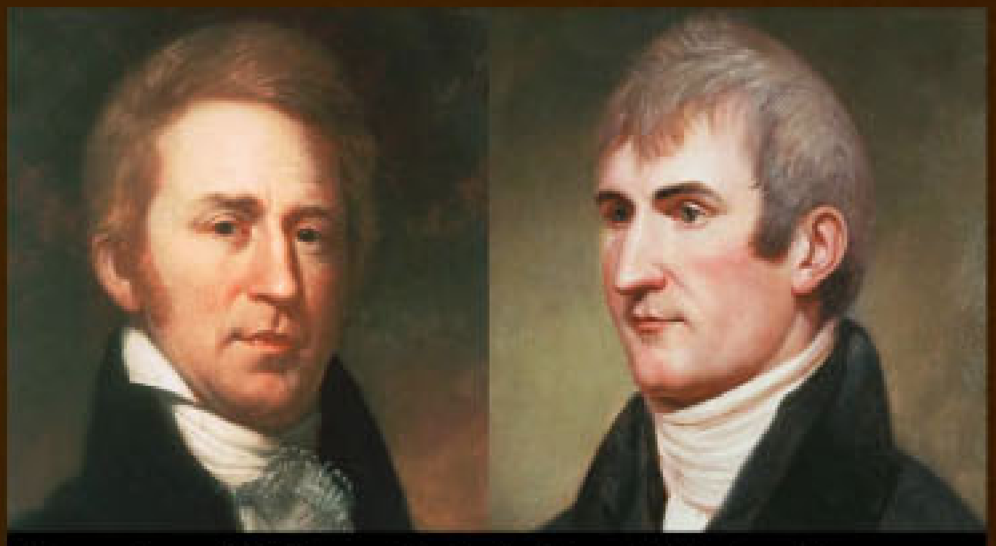
Lewis, Clark and the Corps of Discovery had gone where no white man had gone before. The discoveries they had made, from plant life to animals (grizzly bears, bison, bighorns, wolves and more) to the Native American tribes they met, helped to bring a greater understanding of the nation to Washington, and they changed the shape of the burgeoning United States of America.

Life after the voyage

What became of the intrepid pair once they returned

Lewis and Clark were hailed as national heroes, and President Thomas Jefferson was eager to show how pleased he was, giving both men political appointments. However, in the case of Lewis, these new honours did not help him to find any peace. He struggled with his duties as governor of Louisiana and frequently gave in to his dark moods and burgeoning alcoholism. It ended in tragedy when, on his way to Washington on 12 October 1809, Lewis shot himself.

Clark's life makes for much happier reading. He worked as an agent for Indian affairs and was married in 1808, before becoming the governor of the Missouri Territory for ten years. Despite his harsh words for the Lakota Sioux after their nearly violent encounter, Clark became renowned for his fair treatment of Native Americans (with some accusing him of being too sympathetic). He also cared for the child of Sacagawea after she and Toussaint left young Jean Baptiste (the baby Clark had called Pomp) in his care. He continued to raise Jean Baptiste after Sacagawea's death in 1812, and the young man would later travel to Europe and the German court.



Portraits of William Clark (left) and Meriwether Lewis (right) painted in c.1807

On the trail

Track the intrepid explorers' journey across Louisiana Territory

01. Camp Wood *14 May 1804*

After taking the river down from Pittsburgh and meeting Clark at Louisville, this is where they begin preparing for the expedition. Supplies are gathered, men are trained, and the importance of the voyage is impressed upon everyone. Some disciplining of the men is required before they set out.

02. Lakota Sioux *25 September 1804*

Although they have experienced several peaceful encounters with Native American tribes, the Corps of Discovery has a fraught encounter with the Lakota Sioux on the river near what is now Pierre, South Dakota. Without the interference of the tribe's chief, this could have been the end for everyone.

03. Fort Mandan *October 1804 - April 1805*

The travellers arrive at the Mandan-Hidatsa settlement and make preparations for their winter camp, to be named Fort Mandan. Lewis and Clark arrange for many of their discoveries and journals to be sent back to St Louis, and Sacagawea joins the expedition.

04. The unknown fork *1 June 1805*

The expedition reaches another crucial decision when they find an unexpected fork in the Missouri. It's a gamble to choose the right direction, but they know that they have made the correct choice when they see the Great Falls.

05. Great Falls *13 June 1805*

They had been told about a great waterfall, but having been confronted with the five cascades of the Great Falls, Lewis and Clark realise that going around over ground will be a long, arduous and backbreaking process. However, there is at least plenty of game to hunt.

06. Three Forks *22 July 1805*

The Three Forks of the Missouri are uncharted when the expedition reaches this crucial point. It is near the end of July and they know that if they end up taking the wrong fork, crossing the mountains will become increasingly perilous.

07. Meeting the Shoshone *17 August 1805*

Sacagawea is finally reunited with her people when the extensive search for the Shoshone is over. Lewis and Clark need her to negotiate for horses, and they have an unexpected stroke of luck when Sacagawea realises that the chief is her brother.

08. Bitterroot Mountains *11-23 September 1805*

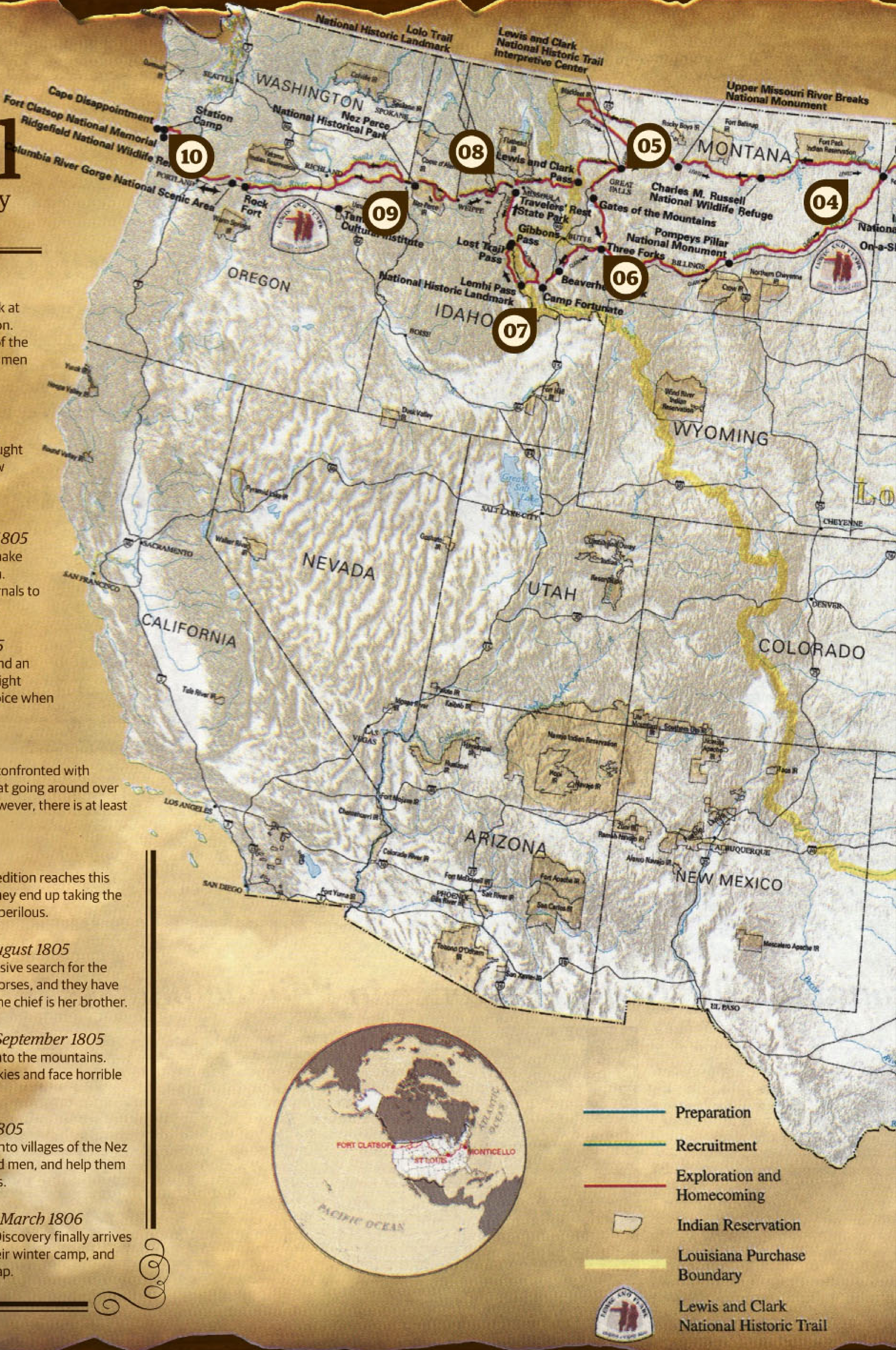
Accompanied by a Shoshone guide, the expedition sets out into the mountains. They are ill-prepared for such a long journey through the Rockies and face horrible weather conditions and the possibility of starvation.

09. Nez Perce *23 September - 7 October 1805*

They finally find their way out of the mountains and straight into villages of the Nez Perce Indians. The locals take pity on the starving, bedraggled men, and help them to prepare for the final stage of their journey with new canoes.

10. Fort Clatsop *24 November 1805 - 23 March 1806*

After one false alarm almost two weeks earlier, the Corps of Discovery finally arrives at the Pacific Ocean. They take a vote as to where to build their winter camp, and dream of home while Lewis works on a new and improved map.


National Historic Landmark
Lolo Trail
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center
Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument
Cape Disappointment
Fort Clatsop National Memorial
Ridgefield National Wildlife Re
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
Station Camp
WASHINGTON
National Historical Park
Nez Perce
SEATTLE
SPOKANE
RICHLAND
PORTLAND
Rock Fort
Tam
Cultural Institute
10
09
08
05
04
06
07
Lewis and Clark Pass
MISSOULA
Travelers' Rest State Park
Gates of the Mountains
GREAT FALLS
MONTANA
Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge
Pompeys Pillar National Monument
Three Forks
BILLINGS
Gibbons Pass
BUTTE
Lost Trail Pass
Lemhi Pass
National Historic Landmark
Beaverhe
Camp Fortunate
Nationa
On-a-Sl
OREGON
IDAHO
BOISE
WYOMING
CHEYENNE
NEVADA
UTAH
SALT LAKE CITY
COLORADO
DENVER
CALIFORNIA
SACRAMENTO
SAN FRANCISCO
LOS ANGELES
SAN DIEGO
LAS VEGAS
ARIZONA
PHOENIX
NEW MEXICO
ALBUQUERQUE
EL PASO
Lo
FORT CLATSOP
ST LOUIS
MONTICELLO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN

—	Preparation
—	Recruitment
—	Exploration and Homecoming
▭	Indian Reservation
—	Louisiana Purchase Boundary
▲	Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

Notable Discoveries

Grizzly bear

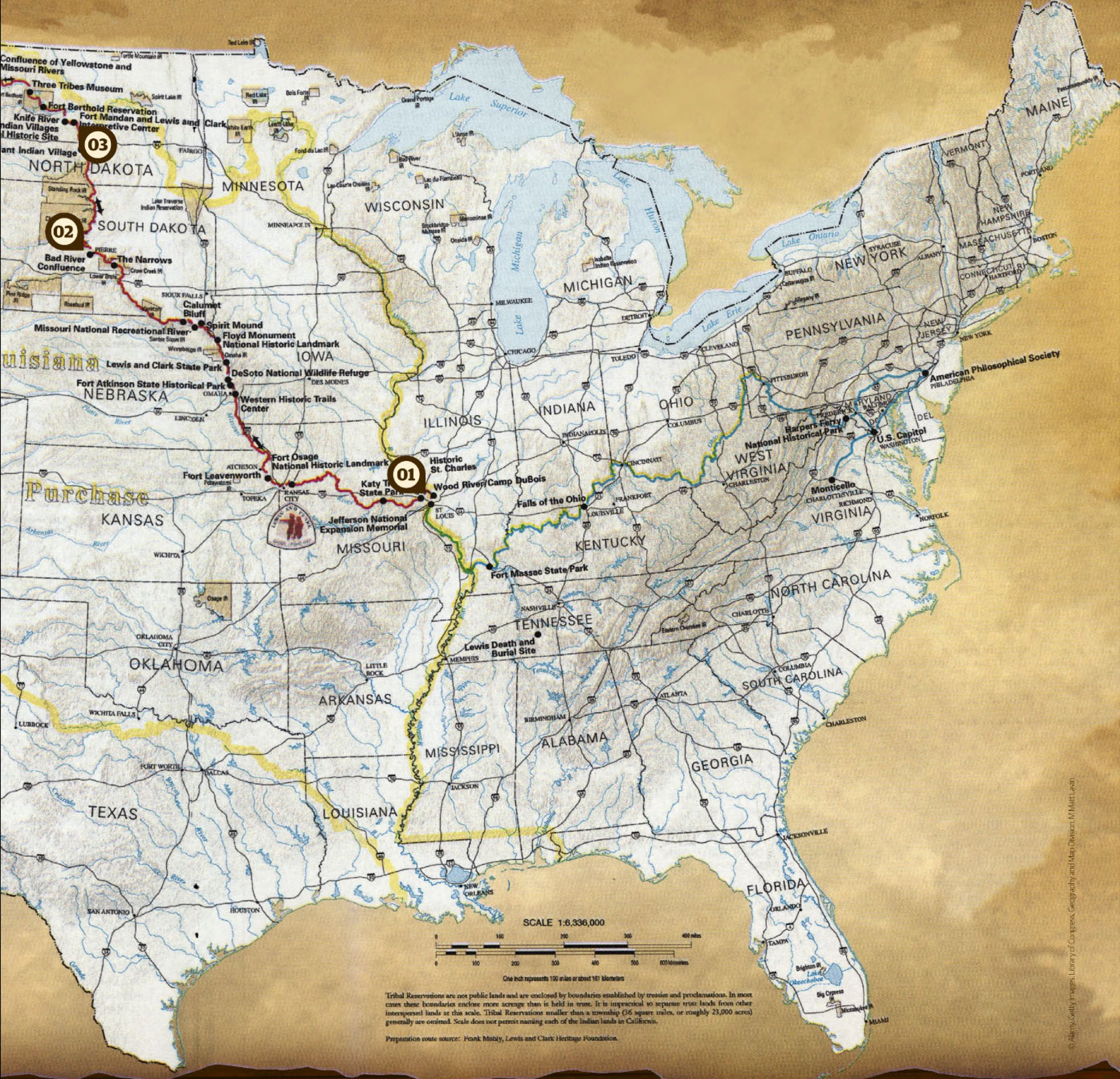
The grizzly bears were far bigger than any they had seen before. It took more than ten shots to bring down a single bear when they faced one.

Prairie dogs

Lewis and Clark found these creatures fascinating, particularly the way in which they lived in connected burrows (described as "towns").

Bison

The explorers were not prepared for the experience of seeing Bison in the wild. Lewis wrote of a friendly calf that was only scared of his dog.


Confluence of Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers
Three Tribes Museum
Fort Berthold Reservation
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site
Fort Mandan and Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center
ant Indian Village
03
NORTH DAKOTA
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
02
SOUTH DAKOTA
PIERRE
Bad River Confluence
The Narrows
SIOUX FALLS
Calumet Bluff
Spirit Mound
Missouri National Recreational River
Floyd Monument National Historic Landmark
uisiana
Lewis and Clark State Park
IOWA
DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge
DES MOINES
Fort Atkinson State Historical Park
NEBRASKA
OMAHA
Western Historic Trails Center
LINCOLN
Fort Osage National Historic Landmark
ATCHISON
Fort Leavenworth
TOPEKA
KANSAS CITY
Purchase
KANSAS
Katy Trail State Park
01
Historic St. Charles
Wood River/Camp DuBois
ST LOUIS
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
MISSOURI
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OHIO
MICHIGAN
Lake Superior
Lake Michigan
Lake Huron
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
MILWAUKEE
CHICAGO
DETROIT
TOLEDO
CLEVELAND
COLUMBUS
INDIANAPOLIS
CINCINNATI
Falls of the Ohio
LOUISVILLE
FRANKFORT
KENTUCKY
Fort Massac State Park
NASHVILLE
TENNESSEE
Lewis Death and Burial Site
MEMPHIS
WICHITA
OKLAHOMA CITY
OKLAHOMA
LITTLE ROCK
ARKANSAS
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
BIRMINGHAM
ATLANTA
JACKSON
LUBBOCK
WICHITA FALLS
FORT WORTH
DALLAS
TEXAS
LOUISIANA
SAN ANTONIO
HOUSTON
NEW ORLEANS
FLORIDA
JACKSONVILLE
ORLANDO
TAMPA
Lake Okeechobee
MIAMI
CHARLESTON
COLUMBIA
SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE
NORTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
NORFOLK
Monticello
CHARLOTTESVILLE
WEST VIRGINIA
CHARLESTON
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
U.S. Capitol
WASHINGTON
MARYLAND
BALTIMORE
DEL
PITTSBURGH
PENNSYLVANIA
American Philosophical Society
PHILADELPHIA
NEW JERSEY
NEW YORK
BUFFALO
SYRACUSE
ALBANY
CONNECTICUT
HARTFORD
MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
NEW HAMPSHIRE
VERMONT
MAINE
PORTLAND
SCALE 1:6,336,000
0
100
200
300
400 miles
0
100
200
300
400
500
600 kilometers
One inch represents 100 miles or about 161 kilometers

Tribal Reservations are not public lands and are enclosed by boundaries established by treaties and proclamations. In most cases these boundaries enclose more acreage than is held in trust. It is impractical to separate trust lands from other interspersed lands at this scale. Tribal Reservations smaller than a township (36 square miles, or roughly 23,000 acres) generally are omitted. Scale does not permit naming each of the Indian lands in California.

Preparation route source: Frank Muhly, Lewis and Clark Heritage Foundation.

© Alamy, Getty Images, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, M Matt Lavin

Coyote

Described as "a prairie wolf", Lewis and Clark heard these creatures howling in the night. They were familiar to European traders, but unknown to the men.

Silver sagebrush

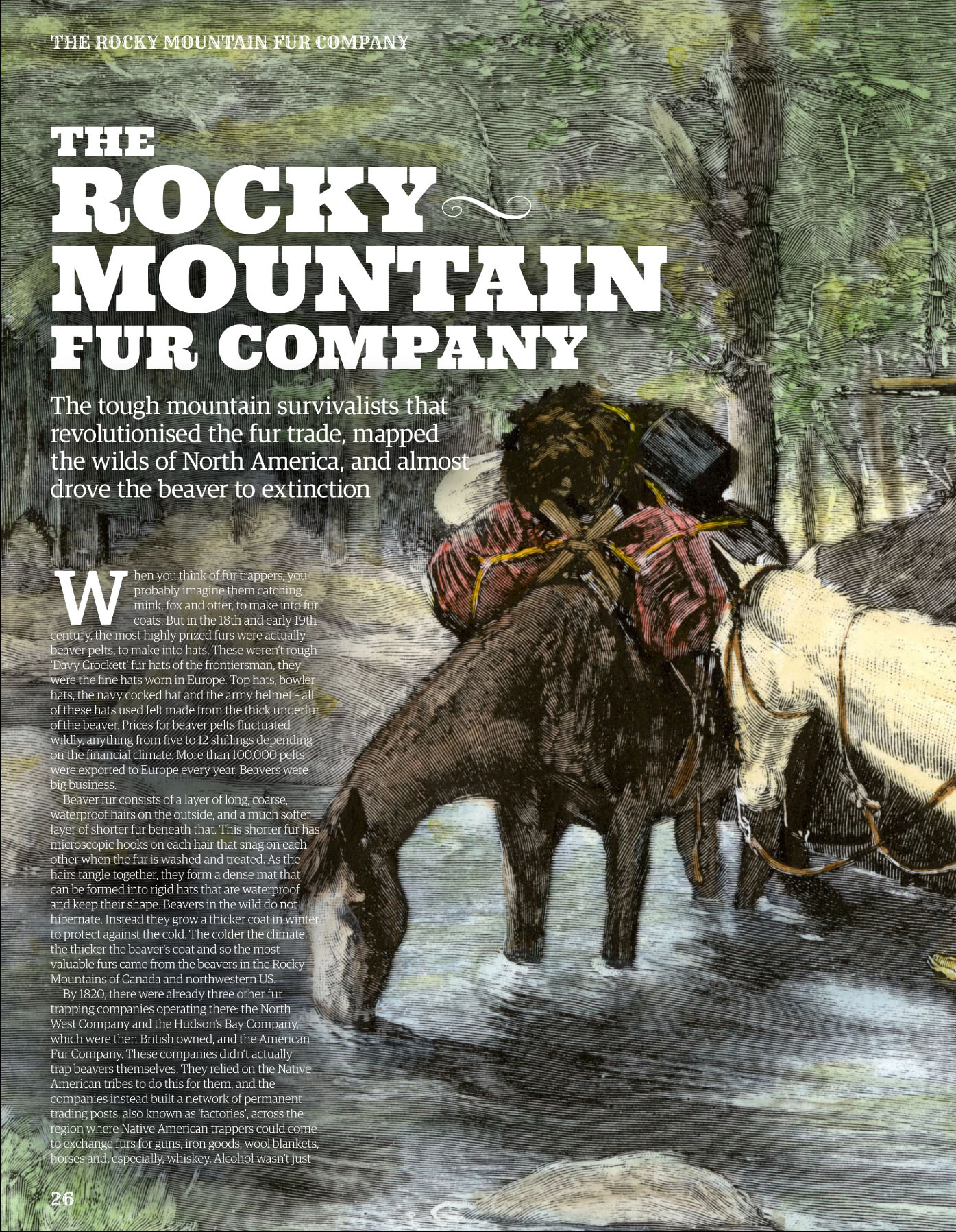
First seen in October 1804, the sagebrush, now known as Artemisia cana, was described as an "aromatic herb", and it spread through great swathes of the West.

Indian tobacco

As a tobacco grower, Lewis took particular interest in the two species he encountered on the trip, taking notes on how the Arikaras tribe grew and harvested their crops.

Douglas firs

Towards the end of the voyage, they saw a variety of fir trees, with Lewis doing his best to describe six in his journal, including the Douglas fir.



THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY

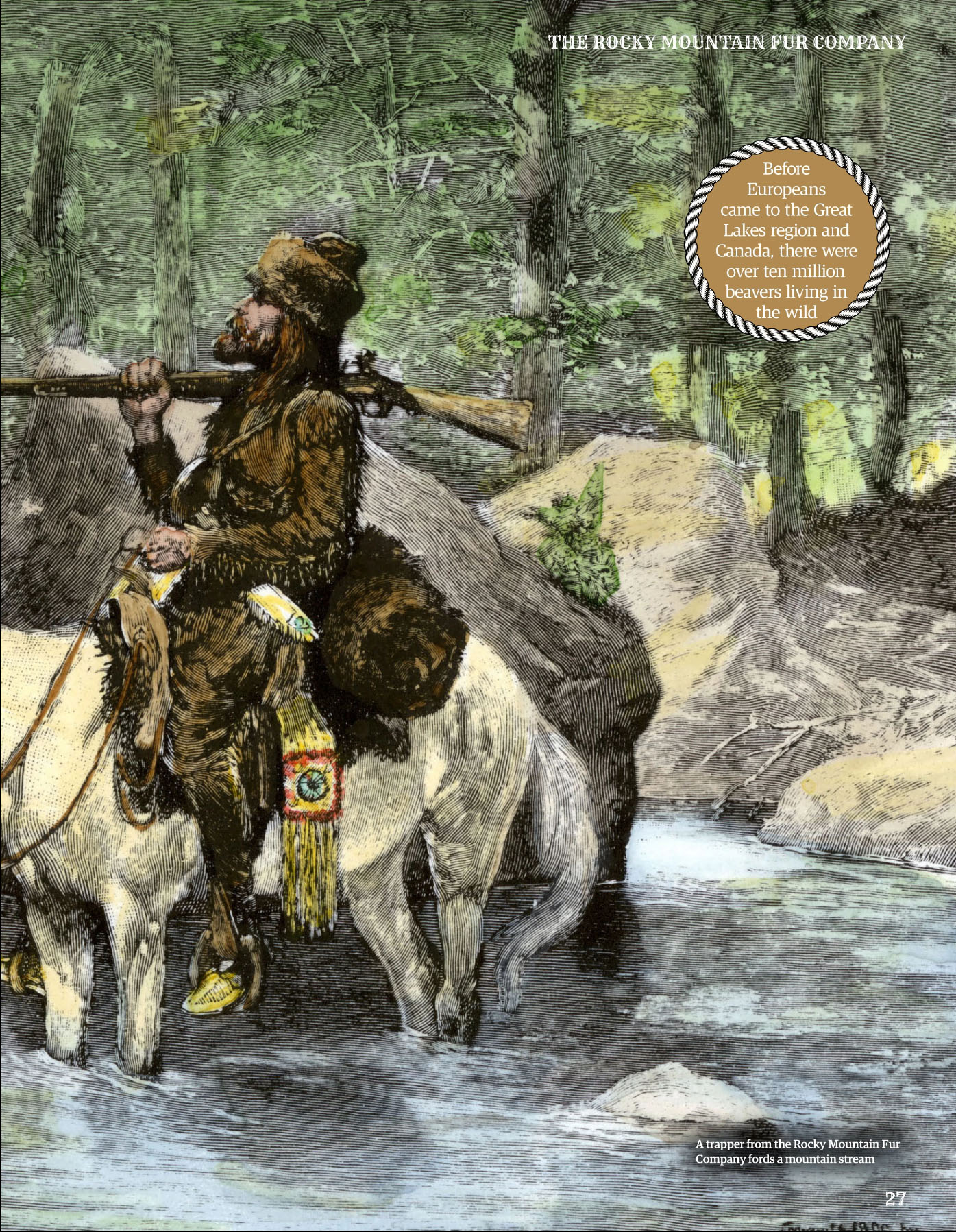
The tough mountain survivalists that revolutionised the fur trade, mapped the wilds of North America, and almost drove the beaver to extinction

When you think of fur trappers, you probably imagine them catching mink, fox and otter, to make into fur coats. But in the 18th and early 19th century, the most highly prized furs were actually beaver pelts, to make into hats. These weren't rough 'Davy Crockett' fur hats of the frontiersman, they were the fine hats worn in Europe. Top hats, bowler hats, the navy cocked hat and the army helmet – all of these hats used felt made from the thick underfur of the beaver. Prices for beaver pelts fluctuated wildly, anything from five to 12 shillings depending on the financial climate. More than 100,000 pelts were exported to Europe every year. Beavers were big business.

Beaver fur consists of a layer of long, coarse, waterproof hairs on the outside, and a much softer layer of shorter fur beneath that. This shorter fur has microscopic hooks on each hair that snag on each other when the fur is washed and treated. As the hairs tangle together, they form a dense mat that can be formed into rigid hats that are waterproof and keep their shape. Beavers in the wild do not hibernate. Instead they grow a thicker coat in winter to protect against the cold. The colder the climate, the thicker the beaver's coat and so the most valuable furs came from the beavers in the Rocky Mountains of Canada and northwestern US.

By 1820, there were already three other fur trapping companies operating there: the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, which were then British owned, and the American Fur Company. These companies didn't actually trap beavers themselves. They relied on the Native American tribes to do this for them, and the companies instead built a network of permanent trading posts, also known as 'factories', across the region where Native American trappers could come to exchange furs for guns, iron goods, wool blankets, horses and, especially, whiskey. Alcohol wasn't just

Before Europeans came to the Great Lakes region and Canada, there were over ten million beavers living in the wild



A trapper from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company fords a mountain stream used to pay for the furs directly, it was used as a bargaining tool – drunk natives were much easier to cheat. Selling alcohol to the Native Americans had been illegal in America since 1802 but this was only enforced for the American government-run factories. The private companies established their factories further north, in wilder country and flouted this restriction. This enabled them to intercept the best quality furs, and at much lower prices, although it was also more difficult and expensive to haul trading supplies to the factories.

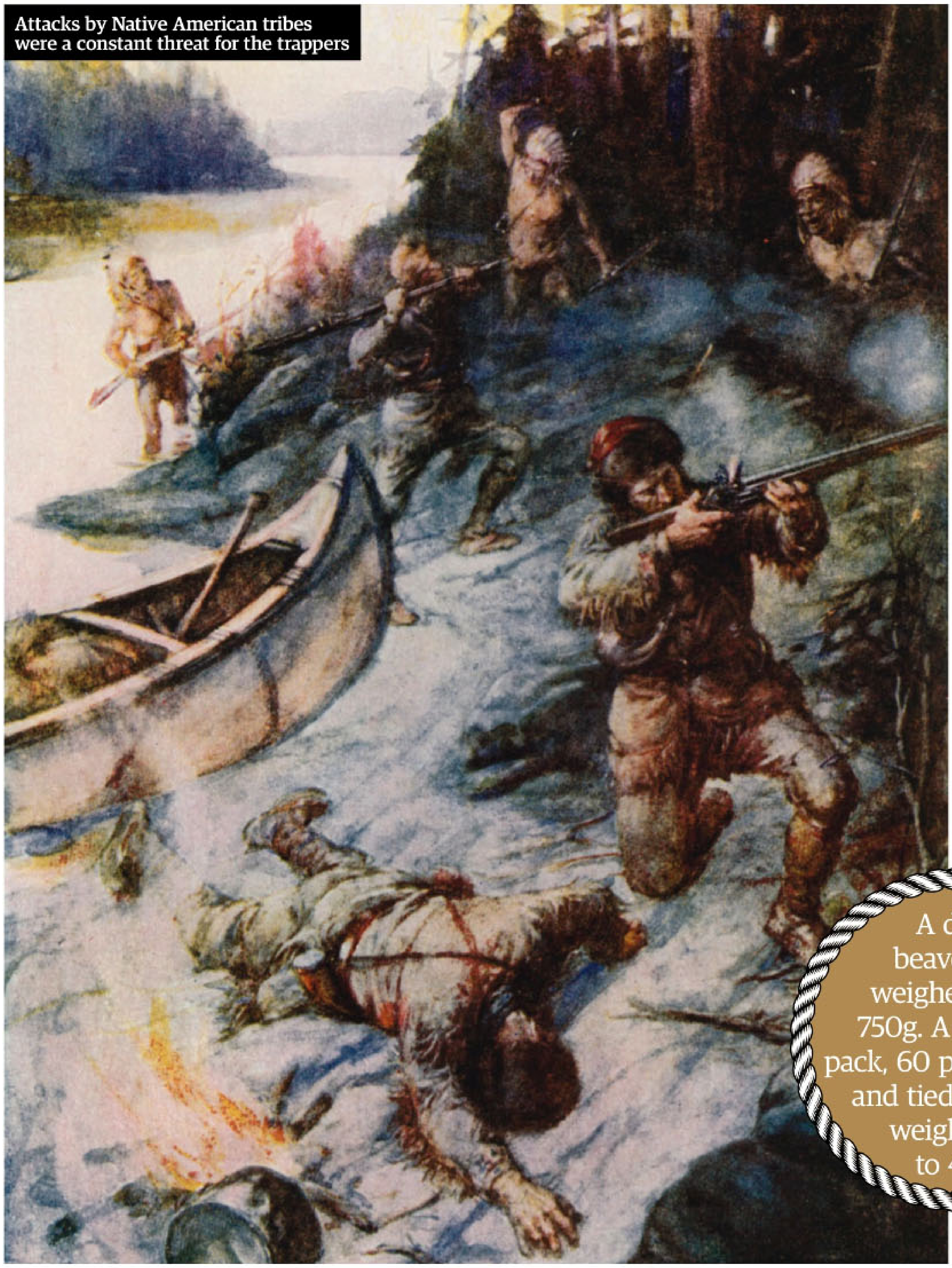
Then, in 1822, William Ashley, a General in the Missouri militia, placed a newspaper advert, calling for "One Hundred enterprising young men… to ascend the river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years." More than 150 men signed up (although they were still referred to as 'Ashley's Hundred') and they would form the backbone of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Rather than using Native Americans to do the trapping, the men were trained to hunt and trap beavers themselves.

'Enterprising' doesn't really do justice to the qualities required of a mountain man. They lived lives of incredible hardship and most of them did not live past middle age. Checking beaver traps involved wading or swimming out into fast-flowing mountain streams in winter. They had to be on the move constantly, living off the land and making temporary bivouacs in the wilderness. Many were killed by bears or elk. Others fell to their death on the steep trails or drowned during river crossings. Even more simply froze or starved to death. One of Ashley's Hundred, Jedediah Smith, was attacked by the Arikara tribe in 1823 and 12 of his men were killed. A few months later he was tackled to the ground by a grizzly bear, which broke his ribs and tore off his scalp and one ear. He survived the attack and a friend sewed his ear back on. Then, in 1827, he was attacked again, this time by the Mojave and ten of his men were killed and two women kidnapped. He had another narrow escape the following year and only survived because he was away from his camp when Umpqua tribesmen attacked and massacred everyone there.

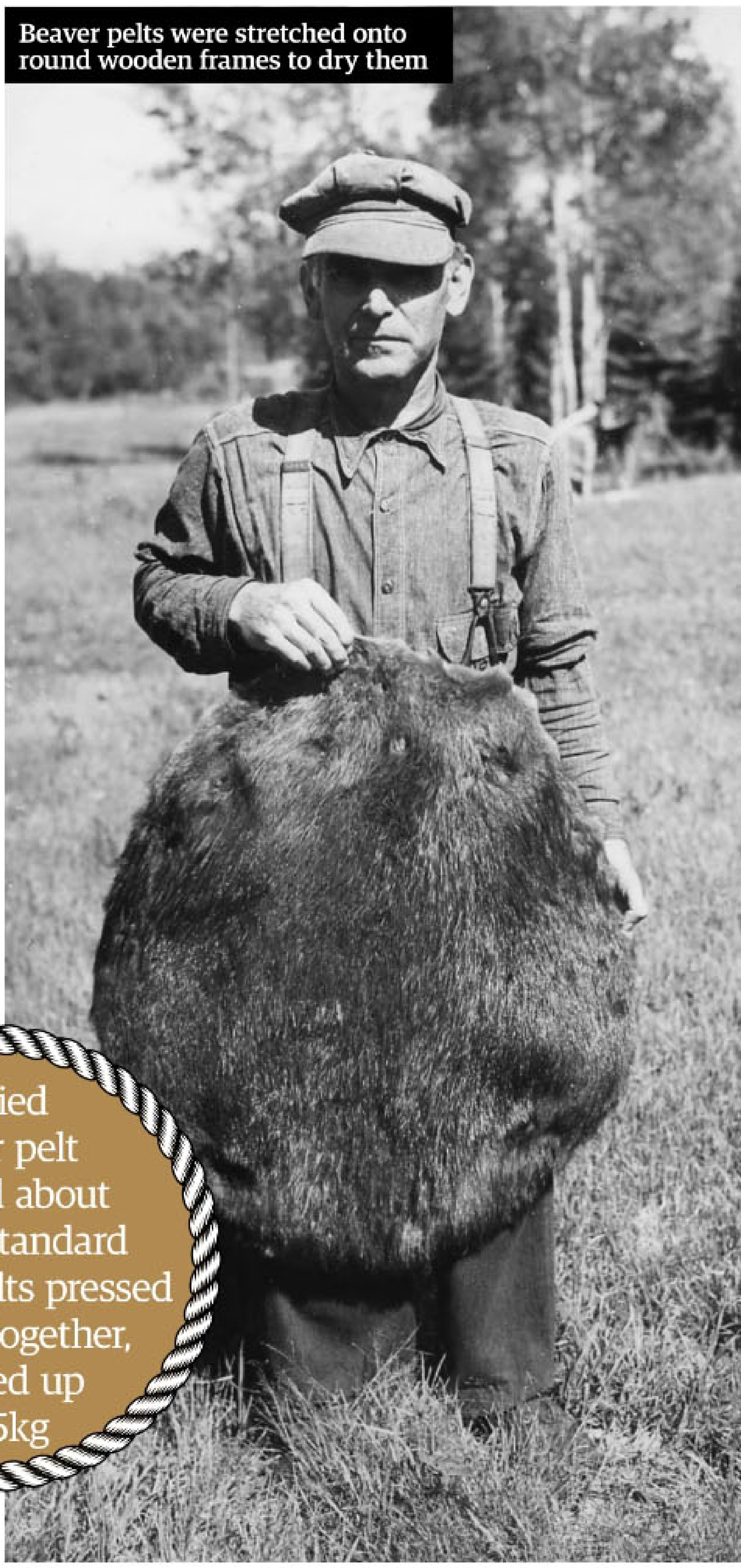
In order to trade with the Native Americans, the other fur companies had to operate their network of trading posts. As well as keeping them stocked with goods to exchange for furs, they needed to be fortified, with their own garrison to protect them from raiding parties of unfriendly tribes.

Beaver pelts that had already been worn by the Native Americans were worth more – body sweat made them more pliable

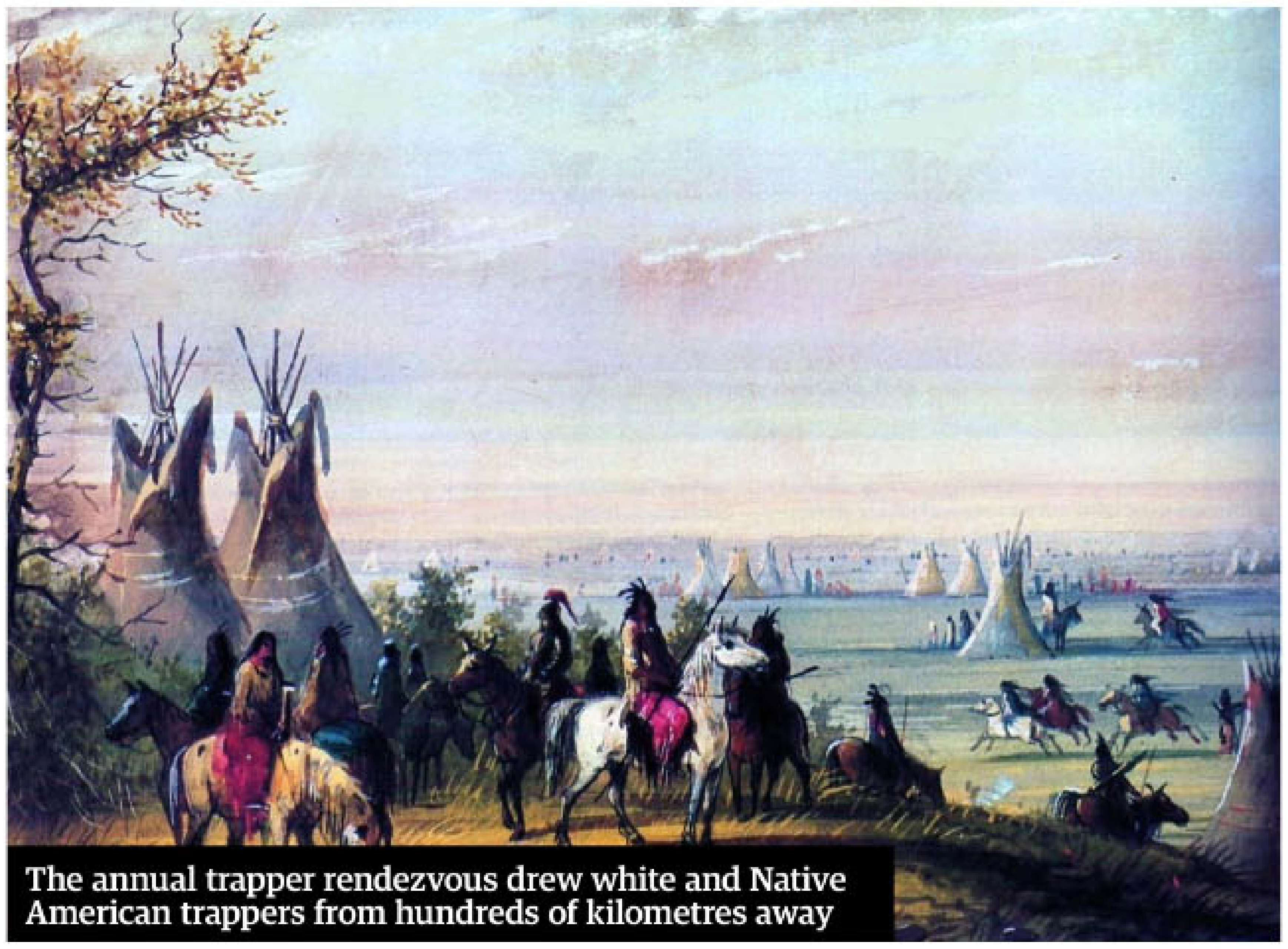
Attacks by Native American tribes were a constant threat for the trappers

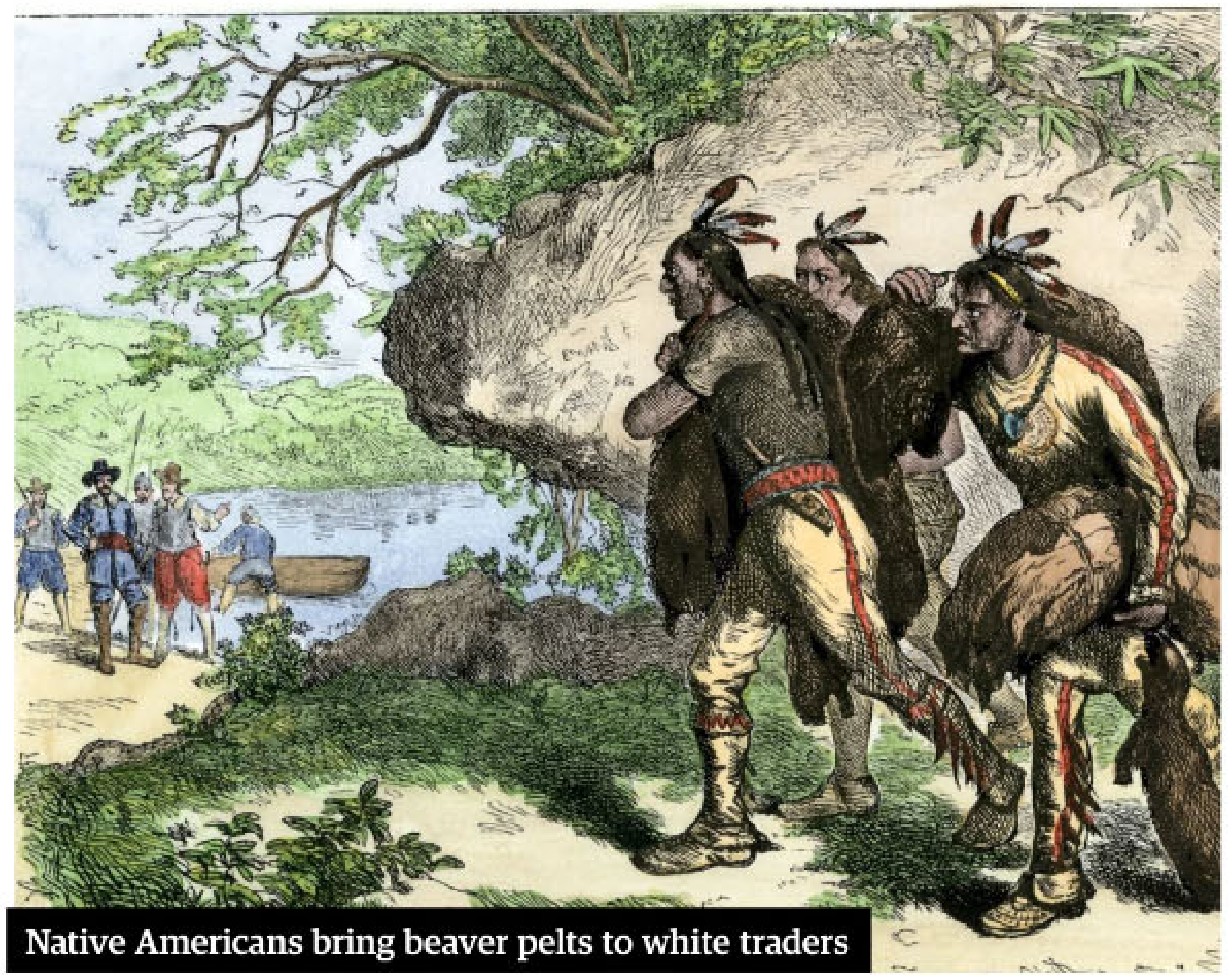


Beaver pelts were stretched onto round wooden frames to dry them



A dried beaver pelt weighed about 750g. A standard pack, 60 pelts pressed and tied together, weighed up to 45kg


The annual trapper rendezvous drew white and Native American trappers from hundreds of kilometres away


Native Americans bring beaver pelts to white traders

The Rocky Mountain Fur Company avoided much of this expense by using what was known as the 'brigade-rendezvous' system. The mountain men weren't loners – it was impossible to survive alone in the wilderness for long. Instead they were organised into small teams called brigades, under a boss known as a 'booshway', from the French word bourgeois. Each brigade would search for beaver dams during the autumn and winter, but leave the beavers alone until the early spring, when their fur was thickest. Then they would trap and skin as many pelts as they could before bringing them all down to a prearranged rendezvous point in the summer, usually along the Green River in what is now Wyoming. The rendezvous was a huge festival as trappers sold their furs and then partied away a good chunk of the proceeds over several weeks of riotous celebration. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company didn't regard the mountain men as simply suppliers either, they were also customers. By establishing the rendezvous points up in the northern wild country, they had a captive market to sell supplies back to the trappers. Trapping equipment, guns, knives, blankets, food and tobacco could be sold at grossly inflated prices to trappers unwilling to make the journey further south to the nearest trading post themselves. In this way the company made a profit off each end of the business.

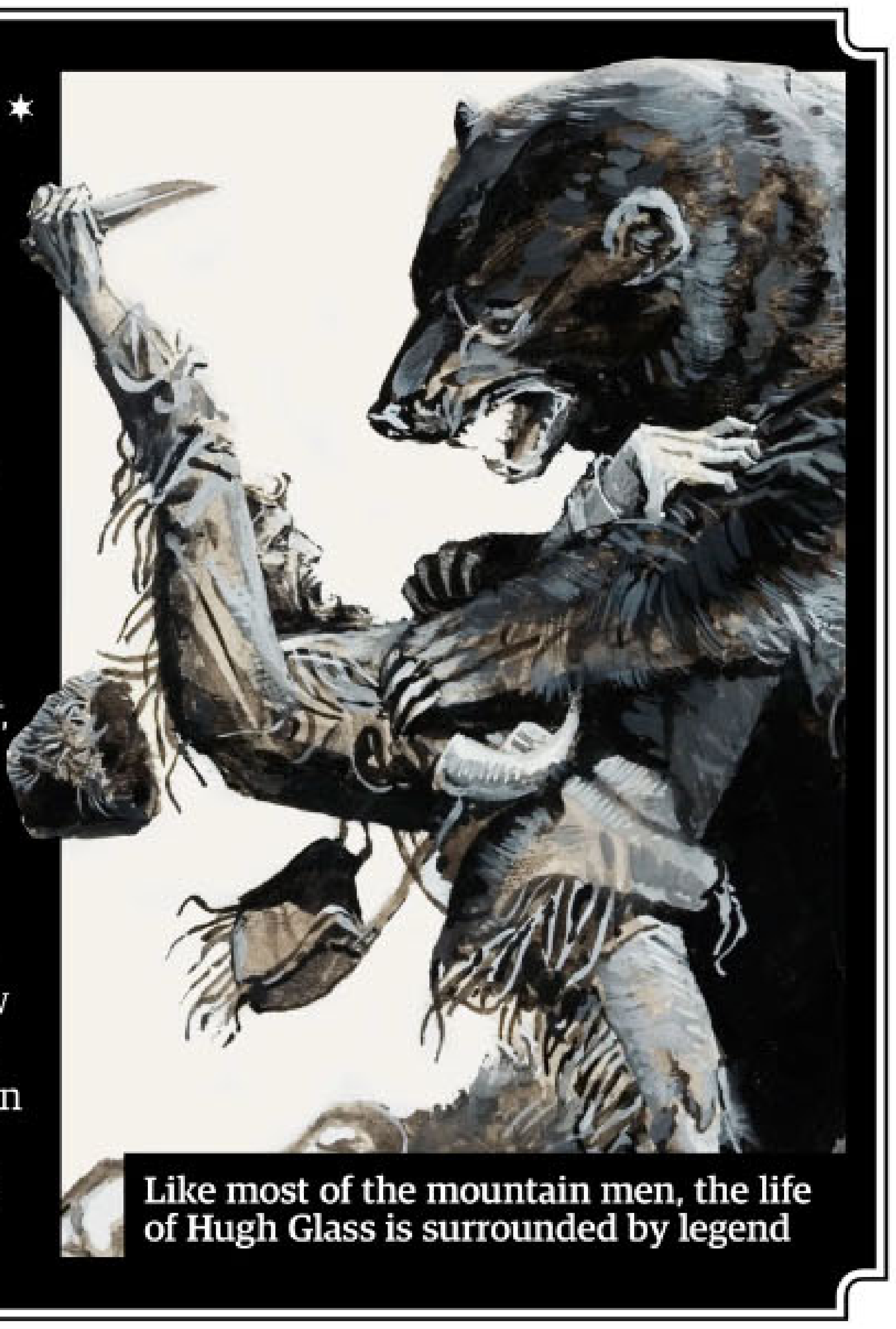
During the 1830s, the beaver populations began to decline steeply. The Rocky Mountain Company had issued instructions that after trapping a beaver dam, it should be left for the next two or three years, to allow the beavers to reestablish themselves there. But the high price of pelts inevitably led many trappers to play fast and loose with this rule and in any case, modern studies have shown that it can actually take up to five years for beavers to return. On top of this, the Hudson's Bay Company adopted an aggressive 'scorched earth' policy of deliberately over-trapping in the Rockies, in order to drive local populations extinct there. The company believed that if they could remove the beavers from Oregon, the American fur companies would leave and the Hudson's Bay Company would have the only remaining source of beavers in the Canadian north. In fact, all their depredations did was hasten the demise of the entire fur trade. All the fur companies were in competition with each other and as the beavers grew more scarce, the price for each pelt rose and the incentive for trappers to hunt down the remaining beavers grew ever greater.

Trappers competing against the Hudson's Bay Company lamented that the initials HBC stood for 'Here Before Christ'

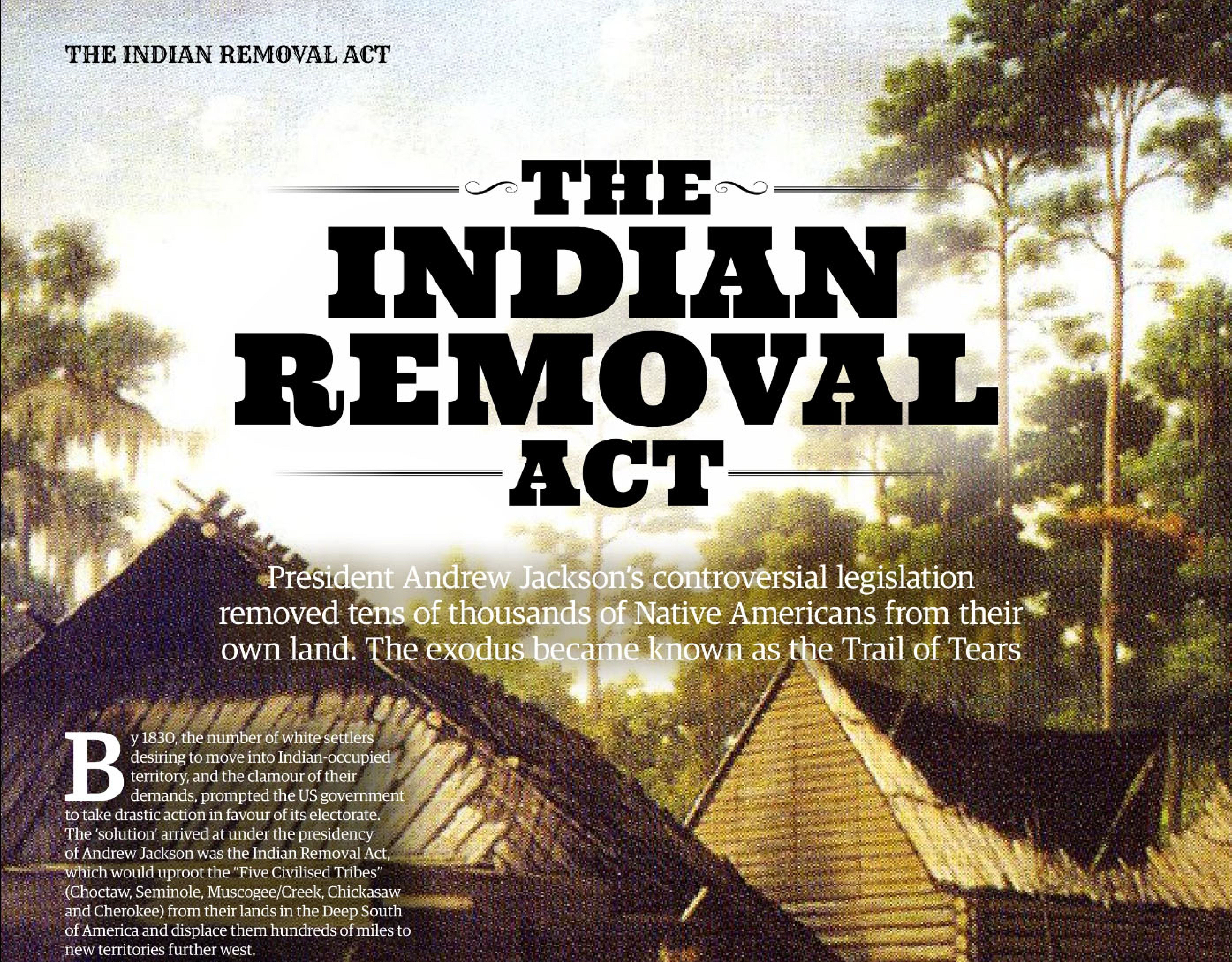
In the 1840s silk started to replace beaver as the preferred material for hats. This was driven partly by the shortage of beavers, but ironically the switch may also have been because of the lucrative trade in beaver pelts across the Pacific to China. These eastern merchants were reinvesting their profits into Chinese silk to bring back to Europe, and its ready availability encouraged hatters to explore it as a substitute for beaver. In 1834 the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was on the brink of insolvency and sold its assets to its former rival, the American Fur Company. But this was only a stay of execution for the mountain men and after 1840 there were no more rendezvous held. Some of them moved on to trap beyond the Rocky Mountains, others became guides for the incoming waves of settlers along the Oregon Trail. In their meticulous quest to locate every possible stream that might harbour beavers, the trappers had incidentally turned themselves into the greatest authority on the geography of the Pacific Northwest. The routes they discovered still bear their names and would later be used by the next wave of fortune hunters during the 1848 Californian Gold Rush.

⋆ The real-life Revenant ⋆

Hugh Glass was a fur trapper, recruited by General Ashley in 1823. On his first expedition he was attacked by a grizzly bear and so badly mauled that his companions were sure he would die of his wounds. Two men were left behind to tend to him and bury him afterwards but they claimed to have been attacked by Arikara natives and forced to flee. Glass crawled and dragged himself across 320 kilometres of wilderness to Fort Kiowa, without a gun or provisions in a journey that took six weeks. The story quickly made Glass into a legend and he has featured in several films, including *The Revenant*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio. However the 2015 film is a highly fictionalised account, and the truth of the story is hard to establish. The first printed account of Glass's survival feat appeared in 1825, written as a literary piece in a Philadelphia journal, although it was later picked up by several newspapers. We know Hugh Glass was real because he is mentioned by his bosses in letters, and wrote a few of his own. But even though he was literate, Glass never wrote anything about his own adventures and most of the details of the story are entirely speculative.


Like most of the mountain men, the life of Hugh Glass is surrounded by legend

©Alamy, Look & Learn, Thinkstock



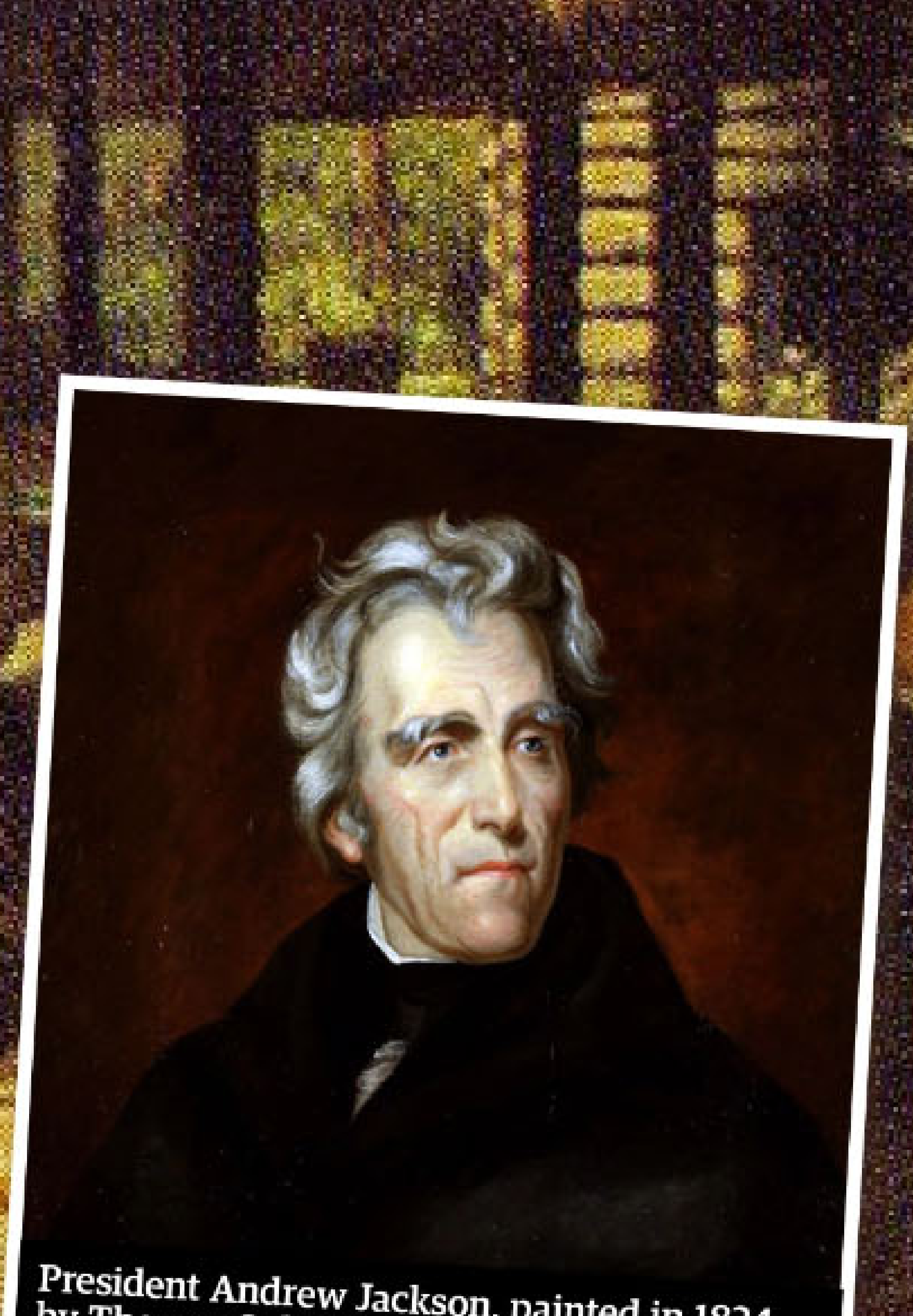
THE INDIAN REMOVAL ACT

President Andrew Jackson's controversial legislation removed tens of thousands of Native Americans from their own land. The exodus became known as the Trail of Tears

By 1830, the number of white settlers desiring to move into Indian-occupied territory, and the clamour of their demands, prompted the US government to take drastic action in favour of its electorate. The 'solution' arrived at under the presidency of Andrew Jackson was the Indian Removal Act, which would uproot the "Five Civilised Tribes" (Choctaw, Seminole, Muscogee/Creek, Chickasaw and Cherokee) from their lands in the Deep South of America and displace them hundreds of miles to new territories further west.

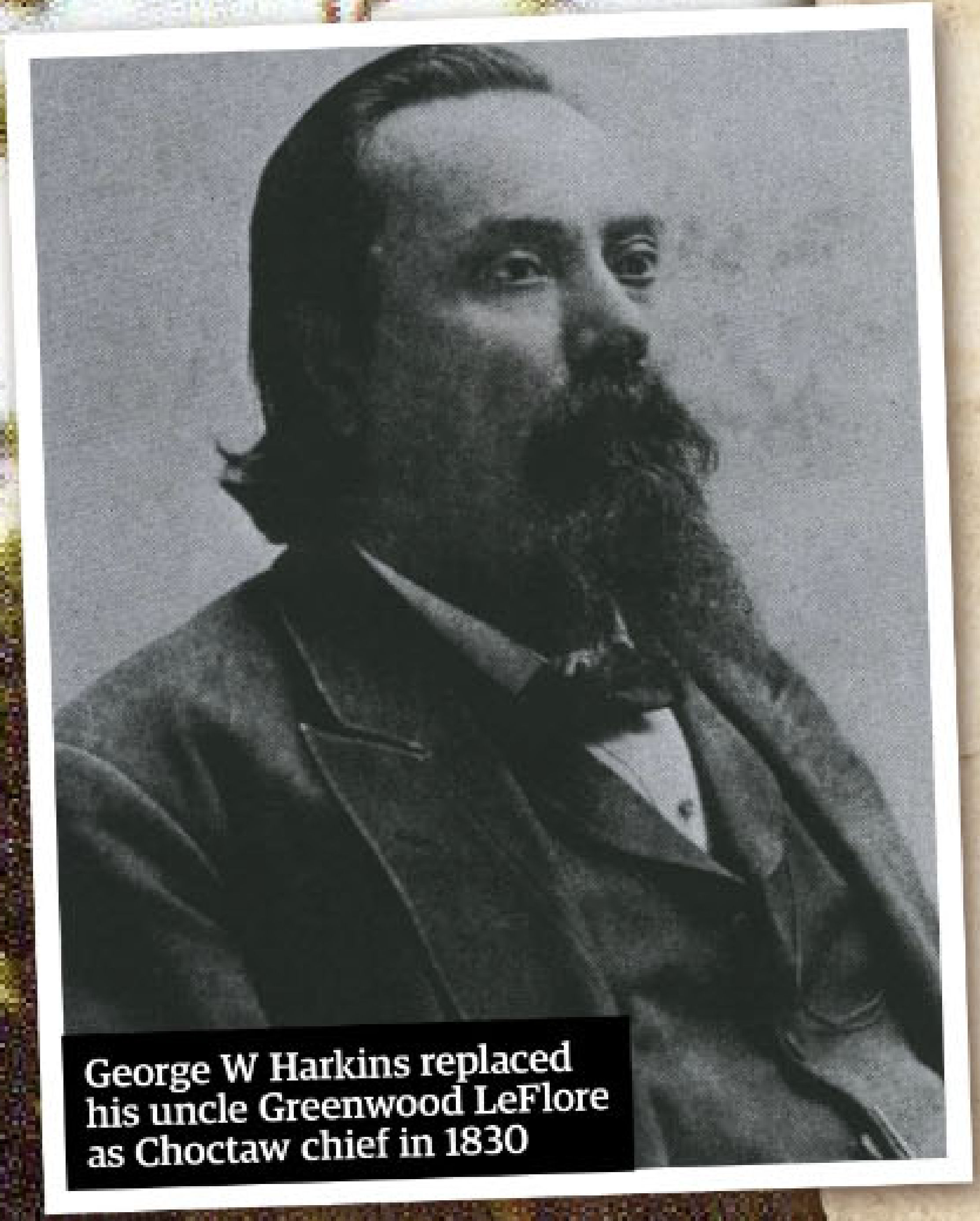
Prior to the act, the five tribes had been assured of their right to remain east of the Mississippi as long as they toed certain lines of European society, such as adopting Anglo-European cultural behaviours and practices and converting to Christianity. Jackson, however, called an end to this era in his State of the Union speech in 1829, arguing that nobody can stand in the way of "progress", and that relocation was the only way to prevent the Indians' otherwise inevitable annihilation. According to his proposal, Indians could only observe self-rule in federally designated reservations west of the Mississippi, and would be forcibly escorted to those lands.

The act was passed in the senate on 28 May 1830, after much acrimonious debate; although in the end, only the maverick congressman Davy Crockett voted against it. Over the course of the subsequent 20 years, the Five Tribes were "escorted" on foot to their new destination in Oklahoma by local militia forces. Many resisted, leading to scrappy wars before the Indians could be subdued and marched on their way again. Disease was rife, environmental conditions were severe, and the Indians were subject to constant attacks en route, meaning that thousands died without seeing the end point of their arduous and unjust journey. The European Americans inherited 25 million acres of land, little caring about the appalling price.



President Andrew Jackson, painted in 1824 by Thomas Sully. Jackson was incumbent in office for almost the entire Removal period

THE CHOCTAW



George W Harkins replaced his uncle Greenwood LeFlore as Choctaw chief in 1830

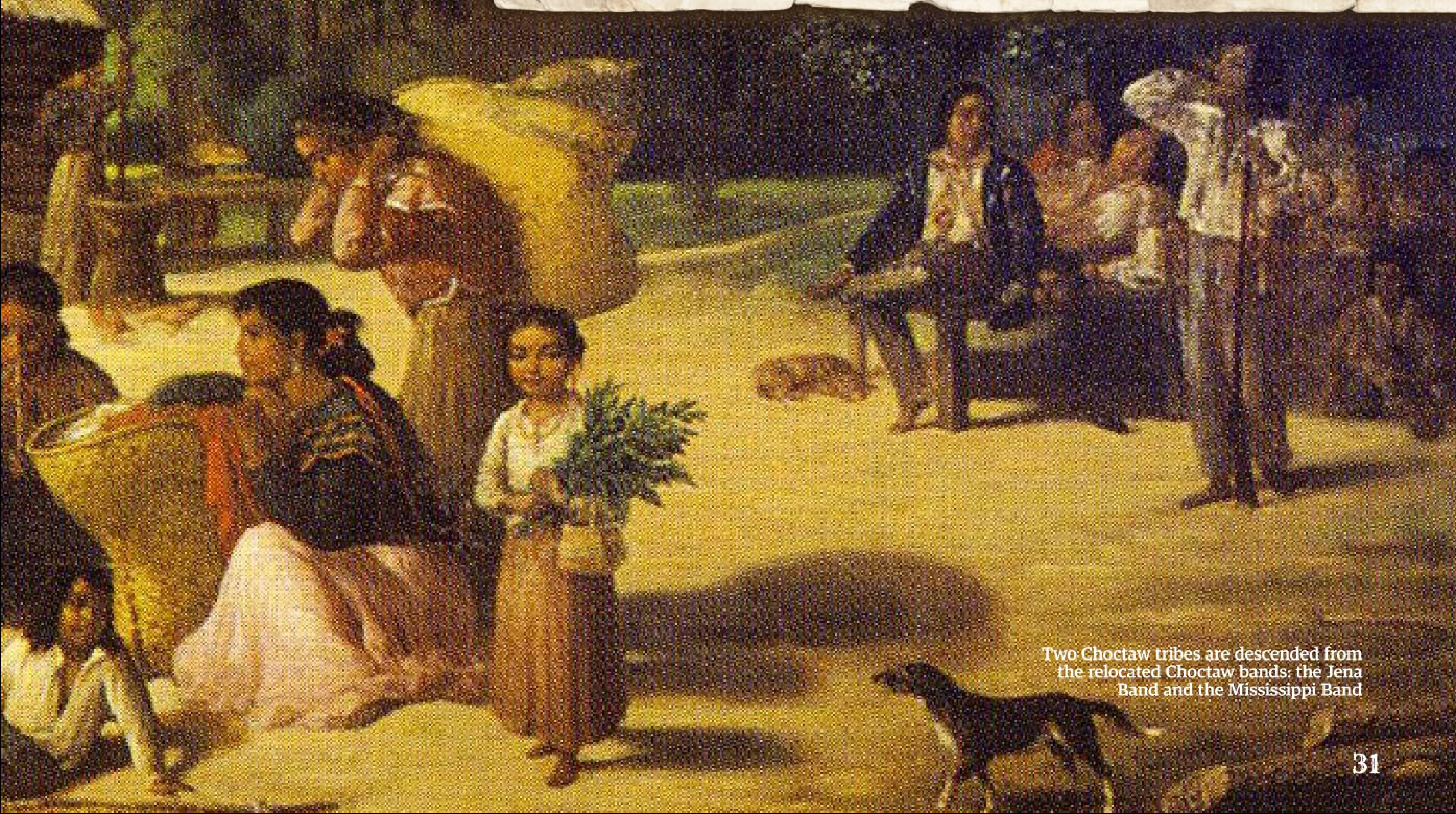
The Choctaw were the earliest of the Five Civilised Tribes to be evicted from their lands in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana, following the Indian Removal Act. Their relocation was managed in three stages between 1831 and 1833 – although some Choctaw refused to leave and their uprooting continued throughout the rest of the 19th century and into the 20th.

The Choctaw nation had come together in the 17th century from the remnants of other tribes that had occupied lands in the Deep South of America for many thousands of years. A lot of Choctaw had fought for George Washington's army during the American Revolutionary War, and in the politically fraught times that followed, the Choctaw generally sided with the nascent United States Government (or at least, never took up arms against it; they even fought with the US against the Creek Indians in 1813). This spirit of cooperation, however, didn't garner them any special treatment or privileges. Jackson visited them in 1820 as a commissioner representing the United States in a treaty negotiating the boundaries of Choctaw lands. He decided to resort to blackmail, bribery and threats to get his way.

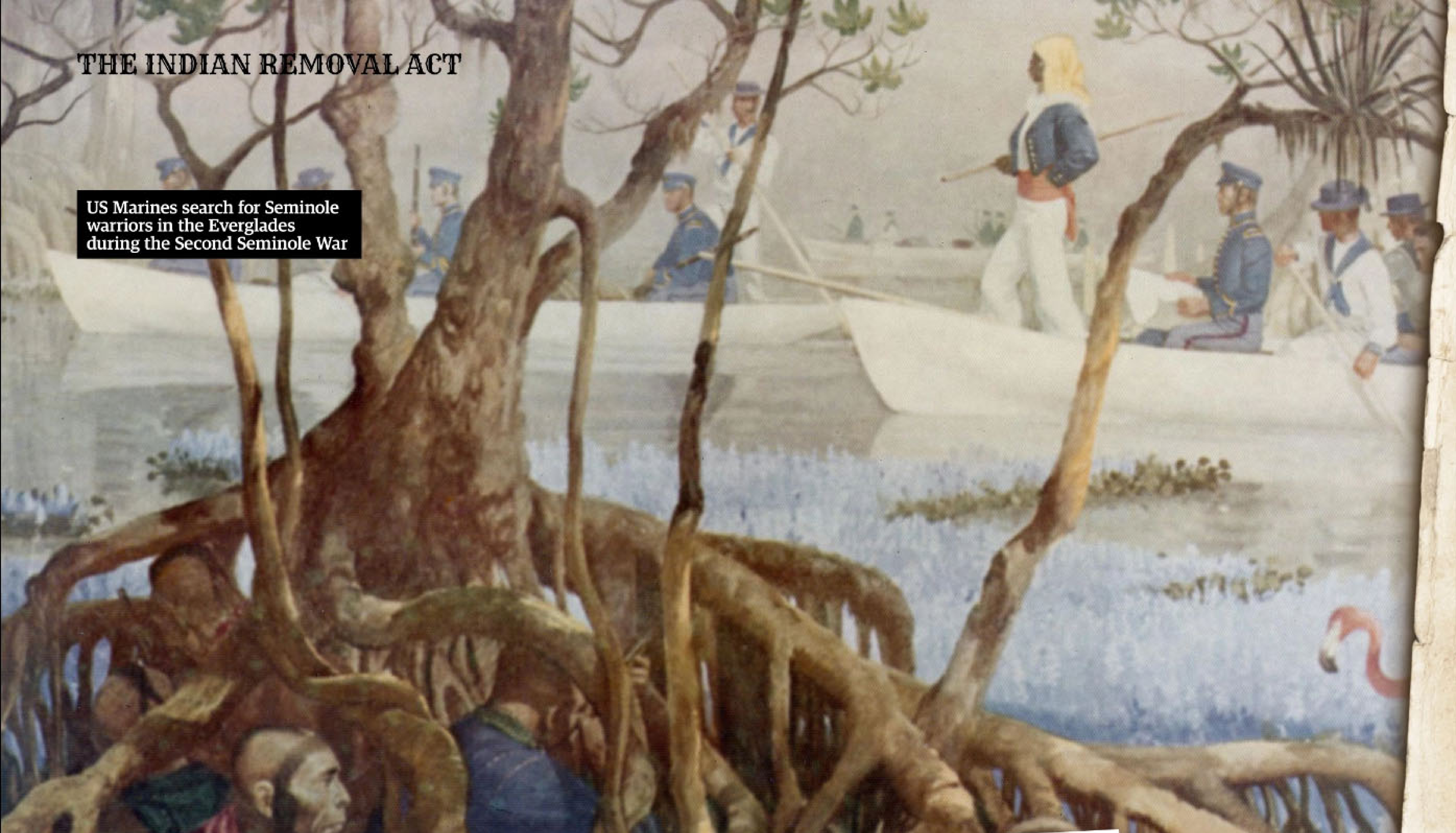
The 1820 Treaty of Doak's Stand saw the Choctaw ceding half their land to the US Government, and agreeing to work towards US citizenship, which would only be granted once they were deemed "civilised and enlightened". But a decade later with Jackson now in office, those remaining rights were lost, and the final 11 million acres of traditional Choctaw land exchanged for 15 million in what's now Oklahoma in the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. It was the Choctaw's final significant land cession treaty, and the first under the Removal Act. Chief Greenwood LeFlore was almost immediately deposed by the Choctaw for signing the treaty, and succeeded by his nephew, George W Harkins.

Following the treaty, the Choctaw divided into two distinct groups: the Choctaw Nation who undertook the trek to Oklahoma, and the Choctaw Tribe, who stayed behind in Mississippi. Those 5,000 or so who held out were granted US citizenship, but endured legal conflict, harassment, intimidation and violence at the hands of the European Americans who wanted them gone (by 1930 only about 1,600 were still there). The 15,000 who left, meanwhile, had to contend with the brutal winter of 1830-31 and a cholera epidemic in 1832. About 6,000 Choctaw died on the journey.

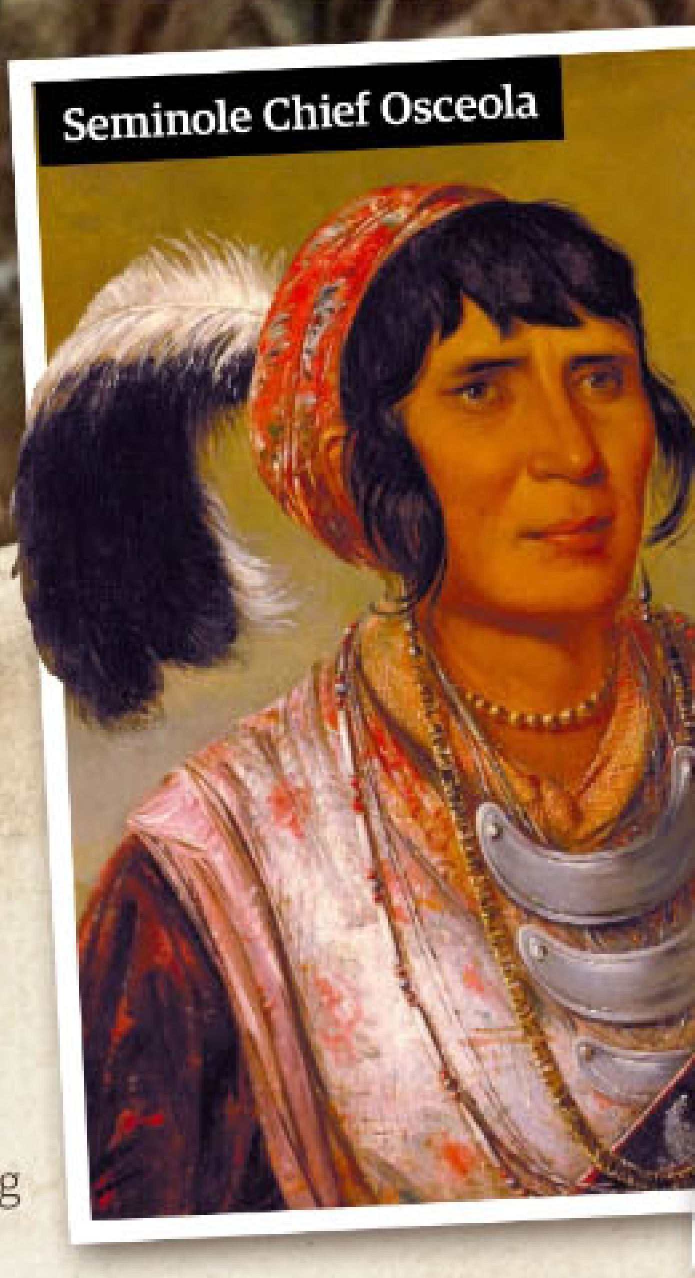
In the years that followed, most Choctaw supported the Confederacy during the American Civil War, largely due to the promise of a state under Indian control. In World War I, the Choctaw were the first of the US Army's famous codetalkers (their language, as far as the enemy was concerned, an unbreakable code). Today they are the third largest of the remaining Native American tribes.



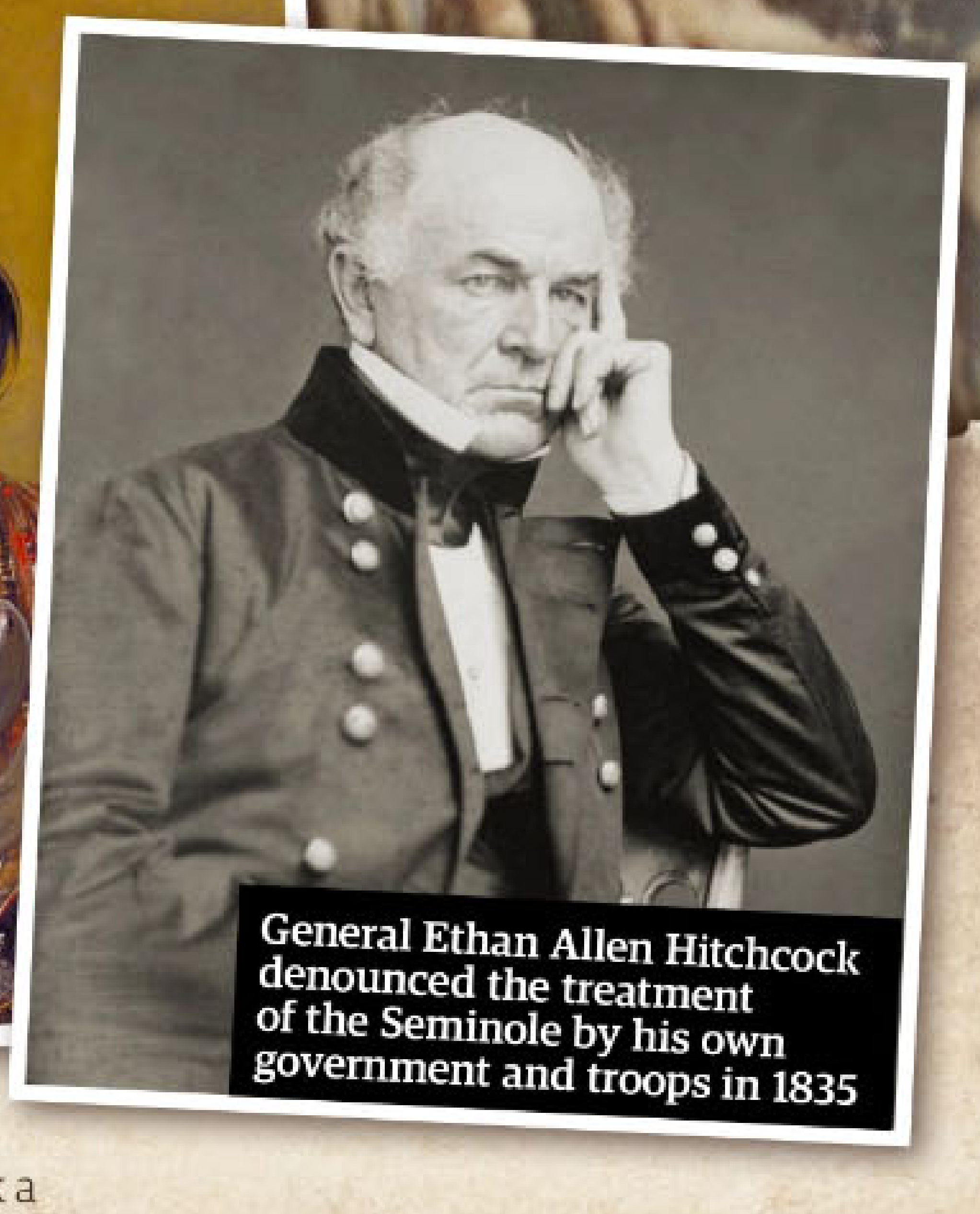
Two Choctaw tribes are descended from the relocated Choctaw bands: the Jena Band and the Mississippi Band



US Marines search for Seminole warriors in the Everglades during the Second Seminole War



Seminole Chief Osceola



General Ethan Allen Hitchcock denounced the treatment of the Seminole by his own government and troops in 1835

THE SEMINOLE

The Seminole had settled in the Florida area in the early 18th century. As a people they were a culture made up of offshoots of the Creek, Choctaw and other tribes. Their name is derived from the Spanish 'cimarrón', meaning 'wild' or even 'runaway'. Under the Indian Removal Act they were to be settled in Creek territory west of the Mississippi and be folded back into the Creek tribe. They put up fierce resistance to this, however, fearing that the Creek – who considered them deserters – would take it upon themselves to be aggressively unwelcoming to the Seminole people.

They had fought Andrew Jackson's initial incursions into Florida in a prolonged conflict between 1816 and 1819. However, the Removal Act sparked the Second Seminole War, which raged from 1835 until 1842.

The specific treaty detailing the proposed removal of the Seminole was the Treaty of Payne's Landing. The seven chiefs of the Seminole had travelled to the new Oklahoma reservation and reportedly signed documents agreeing that it was acceptable. But on returning to Florida the chiefs retracted their apparent consent, saying they had been coerced and bullied into compliance. Even some US Army officers supported this claim. Nevertheless, the Treaty was ratified in April 1834, giving the Seminole three years to vacate the land. When the Seminole refused to recognise the treaty, Florida prepared for conflict.

The 28th of December 1835 saw the Dade Massacre, where 110 American soldiers under the command of Major Francis Dade were ambushed and killed by Seminole Warriors. US Major Ethan Allen Hitchcock, who found the bodies, wrote that it was a wholly avoidable tragedy brought about by "the tyranny of our government". Further skirmishes took place in the subsequent months at Fort Brooke, Fort Barnwell, Camp Cooper, Fort Alabama and Fort Drane, none of which resulted in the defeat of the Seminole: several of the forts even had to be abandoned by the American troops. It eventually took a force of 9,000 US marines, navy and militia, under the command of Major General Thomas Jesup, to subdue an Indian resistance that had never numbered more than 1,400 warriors. A truce was reached following the Battle of Hatchee-Lustee in January 1837. Hundreds of Seminole surrendered at this point, but those few who did not kept the conflict going until August 1842.

The last act of the war was the capture of Chief Tiger Tail (one of the Seminole leaders during the Dade Massacre) and the killing of his small band of holdouts. Tiger Tail died in New Orleans before he could be transported to Oklahoma. Most of the Seminole resigned themselves to removal, although a hundred or so remained in the Florida Everglades and were left alone on an-ad-hoc reservation of their own. They remain the only tribe never to relinquish their sovereignty or sign a peace treaty with the US.

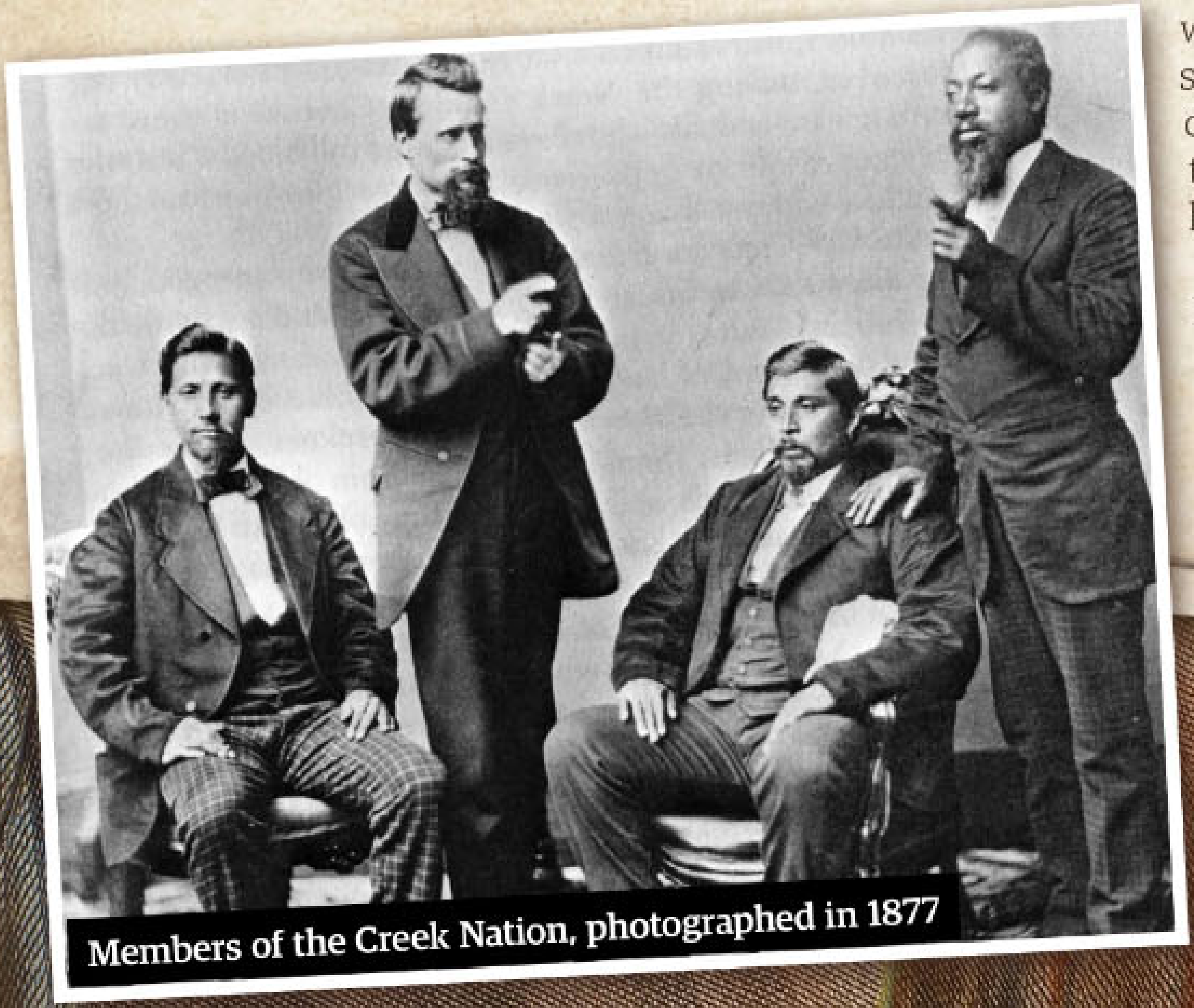
THE CREEK

Indigenous to the Southeastern Woodlands of the United States, the Creek had been the first Native Americans to be classed as "civilised": they were the first of the Five Civilised Tribes. That's perhaps surprising given their history of resistance and conflict with the US. They had seen their lands ceded to the US by the British following the American Revolution, and had fought alongside the Cherokee against the white settlers of Tennessee during the Cherokee-American Wars of the late 1700s.

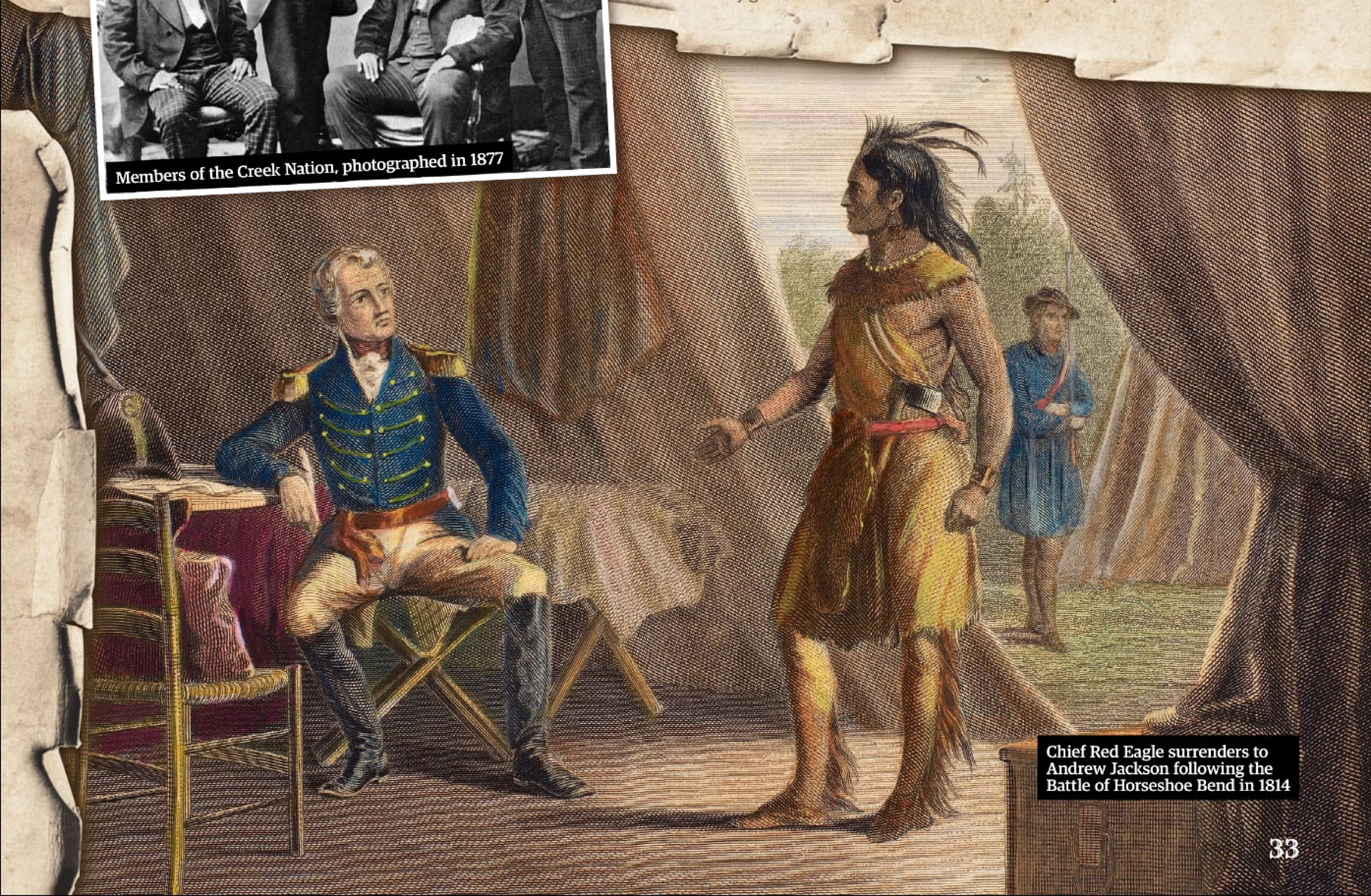
The outbreak of the Creek War in 1813 was a series of conflicts between the Creek's Red Stick faction and American militias. There were several Red Stick attacks on American forts, including a famous massacre at Fort Mims, Alabama in August. Creek men, women and children were slaughtered in retaliation for an atrocity at Tallushatchee in November of the same year. General Andrew Jackson finally put down the rebellion at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in March 1814. The Creek signed the Treaty of Fort Jackson in August, ceding 23 million acres of land in Georgia and Alabama to the US Government. The war effectively undid all the work of previous Creek generations who had attempted to coexist peacefully with the European-American settlers. The antipathy Jackson developed for the Creek during the conflict would be carried into his presidency.

By the time of the Indian Removal Act, there were still about 20,000 Creek in Alabama. Their lands had been divided into individual allotments, and the terms of 1832's Treaty of Cusseta actually gave them the choice of remaining in situ (and submitting to state laws) or relocating to Oklahoma with financial compensation for doing so. In practice, however, staying in place was never really an option. Illegal occupation of Creek lands by settlers was widespread, with US authorities largely turning a blind eye. The increasingly impoverished and desperate Creek resorted once again to attacking the interlopers, leading to the short-lived Second Creek War of 1836. It ended with the forced removal of the Creek by troops under the command of General Winfield Scott. In mid-1837 about 15,000 Creek were first rounded up into internment camps and then driven from their land for the final time. About a quarter of them died on the arduous journey west to Oklahoma.

Subsequently the Creek were divided in their loyalties during the American Civil War, with some supporting the Confederacy and others siding with the Union. President Abraham Lincoln initially rewarded the loyalists with increased government aid, but the actions of the rebels meant a new treaty was required in 1866. Under its terms the Creek lost further territory, with part of the Creek reservation given over to recently emancipated slaves.



Members of the Creek Nation, photographed in 1877



Chief Red Eagle surrenders to Andrew Jackson following the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814

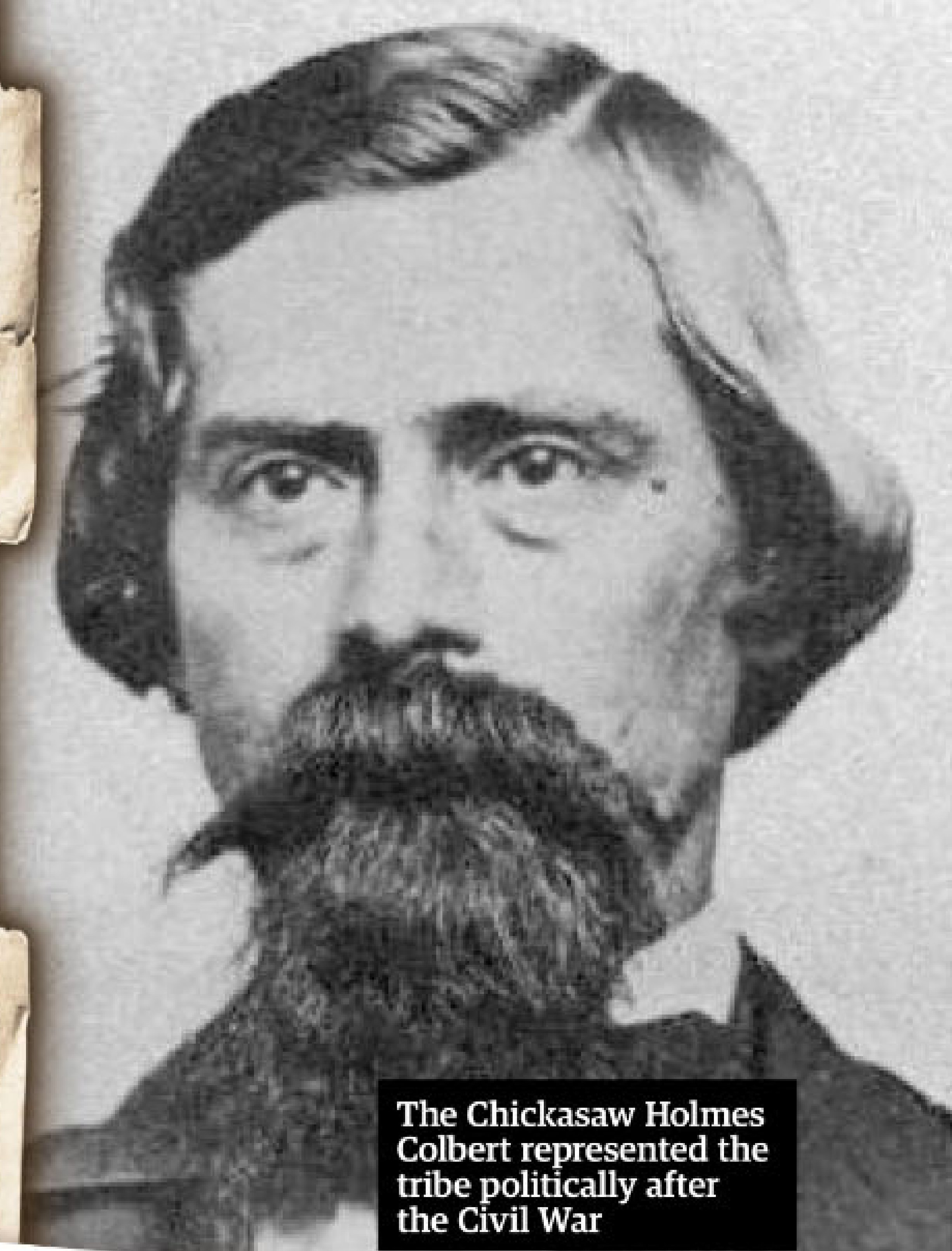
THE CHICKASAW

The Chickasaw are closely related to the Choctaw. Their oral history recalls their settling in Mississippi in prehistoric times, and the two peoples separated into distinct tribes sometime in the 17th century. Their first contact with Europeans was when the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto encountered them in 1540. After several disagreements they attacked his entourage and he swiftly moved on. They allied with the British in 1670 (a period that often brought them into conflict with the Choctaw), and with the newly formed United States in the Revolutionary War. Subsequently they tended always to side with the US and its government, even as their rights and lands were eroded.

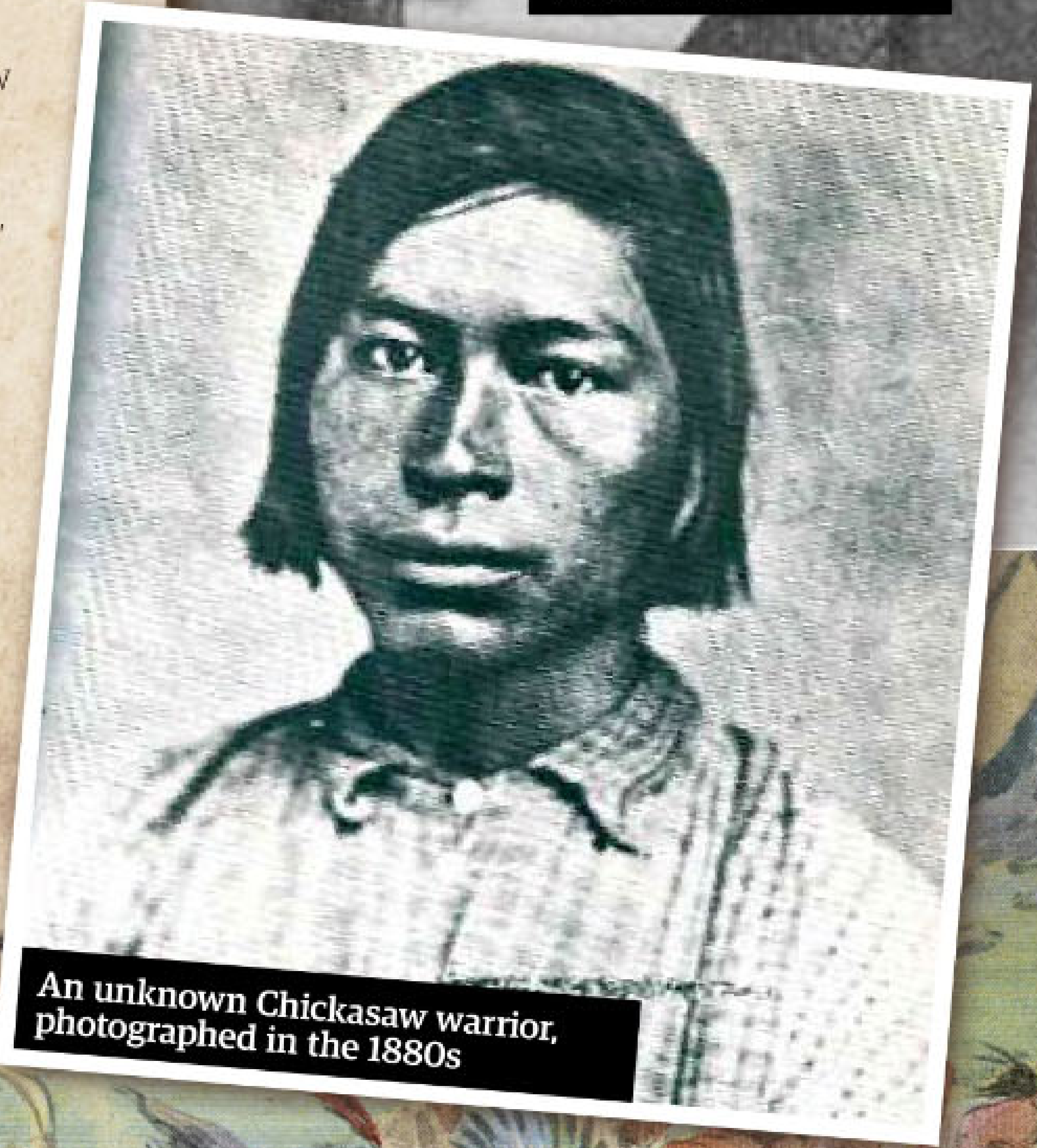
The treaty securing their removal west was that of Pontotoc Creek in 1832. A previous attempt had failed in 1830, when the Chickasaw had baulked at the poor quality of the land they were being offered in Oklahoma. But two years later, with the encroachment of the European-American settlers onto their valuable Mississippi territories, and an epidemic of whiskey addiction, they began to feel their culture was being overwhelmed and on the point of being wiped out. An indication of their desperation at this point is that they ended up ceding their Mississippi lands to the government on merely the promise of new land being found for them. Uniquely among the Five Civilised Tribes, they were also persuaded to pay for their own migration. They used the financial compensation they received for their Mississippi lands to buy a part of the Choctaw tribe's new Oklahoma territory. The American Senate ratified the agreement between the Chickasaw and the Choctaw in the 1837 Treaty of Doaksville - unusual for an internal matter between Native Americans.

The Chickasaw's migration west began in 1837 and continued into the following year. Just under 5,000 Chickasaw made the journey, which was accomplished relatively successfully compared to the trails of tears the other four tribes endured. Instead, their privations began on arrival, when most Chickasaw, rather than gaining their own new district on former Choctaw land as arranged, were interned in temporary camps in Choctaw towns and government supply depots. Poverty, addiction, internal political disputes and attacks from other tribes were rife, and it would be another 15 years before they were finally settled in a dedicated Chickasaw territory.

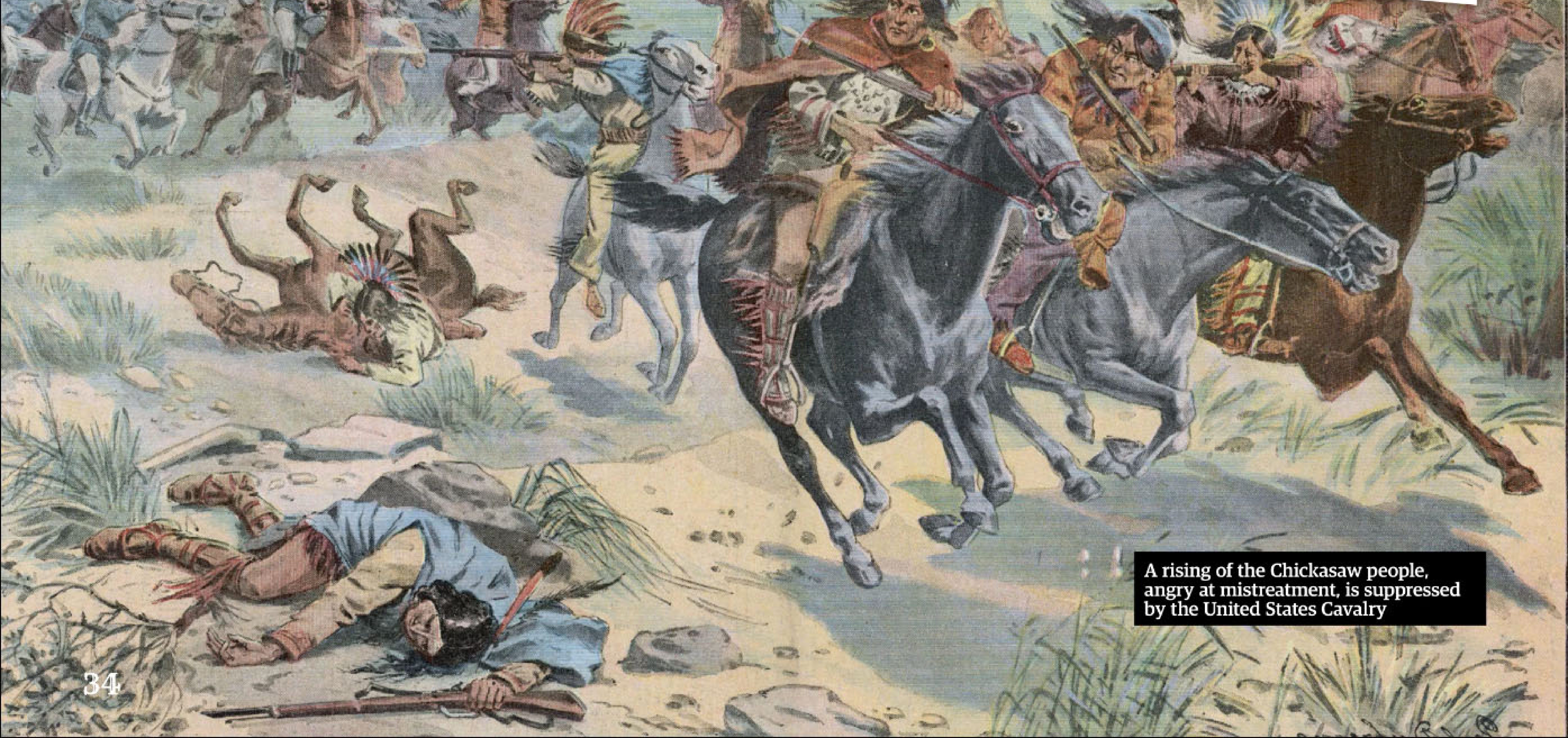
The Chickasaw formally separated from the Choctaw, emerging as a new Chickasaw Nation in 1856. In the Civil War they joined the Confederacy. By 1907, following the defeat of the Five Tribes' petition for statehood, the Chickasaw were a powerless minority in their own lands. The 20th century saw a revival in their fortunes, however. They were officially recognised as a Nation again in 1983.



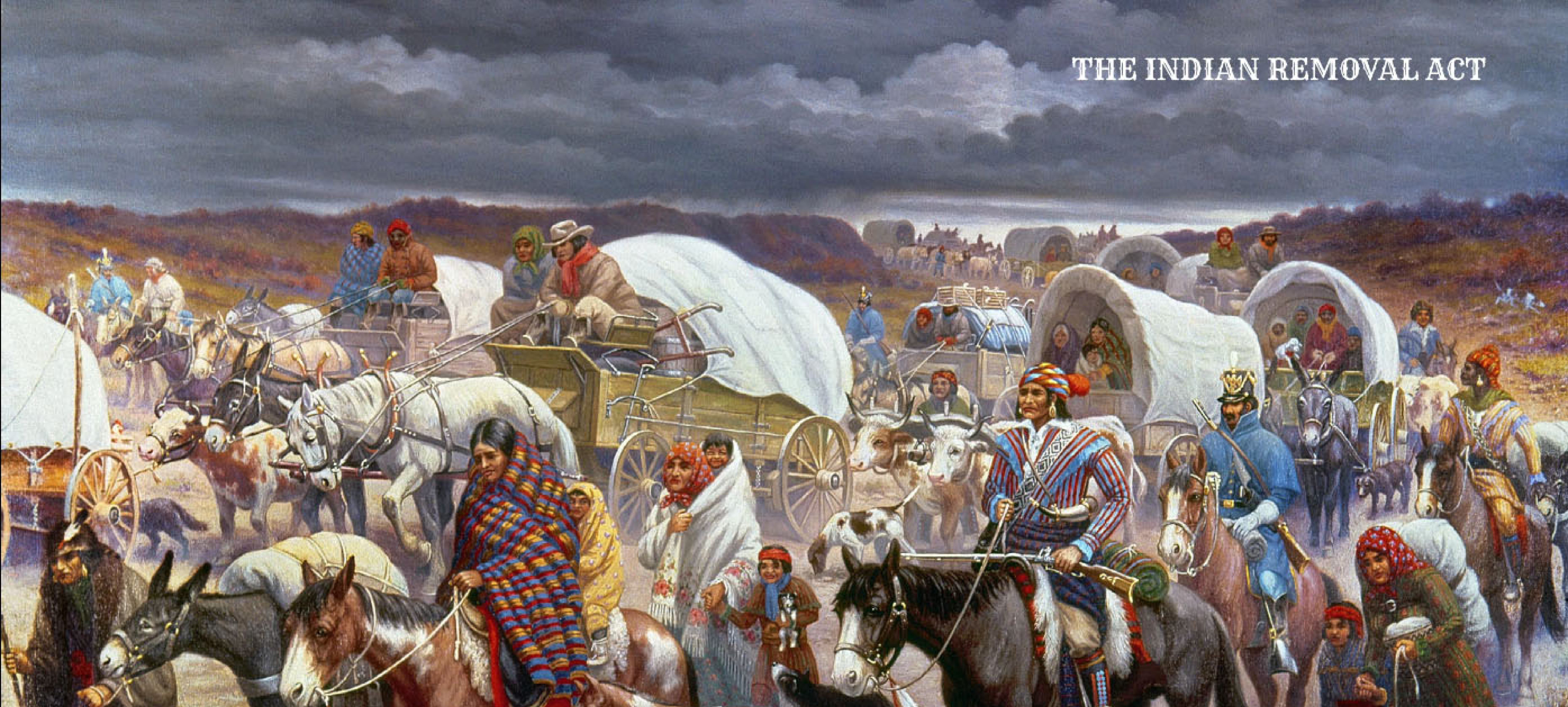
The Chickasaw Holmes Colbert represented the tribe politically after the Civil War



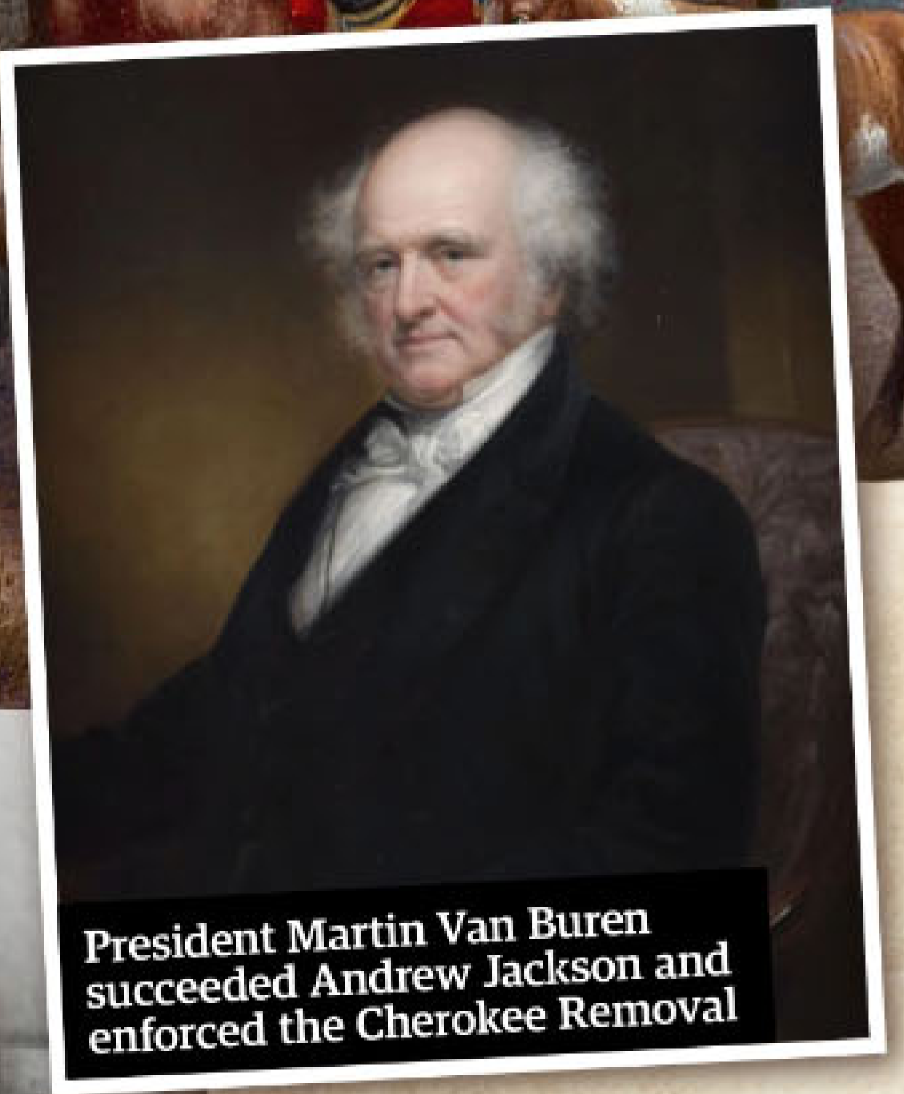
An unknown Chickasaw warrior, photographed in the 1880s



A rising of the Chickasaw people, angry at mistreatment, is suppressed by the United States Cavalry



The Cherokee are pictured here removing to the West



President Martin Van Buren succeeded Andrew Jackson and enforced the Cherokee Removal

Elizabeth Brown Stephens was one of thousands of Cherokee on the Trail of Tears. This photograph was taken in 1903 when she was 82

THE CHEROKEE

Incursion on Indian land by European-American settlers had always been due to its particular desirability, whether for perfect farming conditions, mineral deposits, or both. In the case of the Cherokee's land in Georgia, however, there was a very specific reason: gold. The Georgia Gold Rush, in which thousands of prospectors descended on Cherokee land in search of their fortune, began in 1829, preceding the more famous California Gold Rush by 20 years. The Cherokee, who had inhabited the land since prehistoric times, were quickly overwhelmed. The State of Georgia, far from supporting its indigenous people, was desperate to get them out of the way.

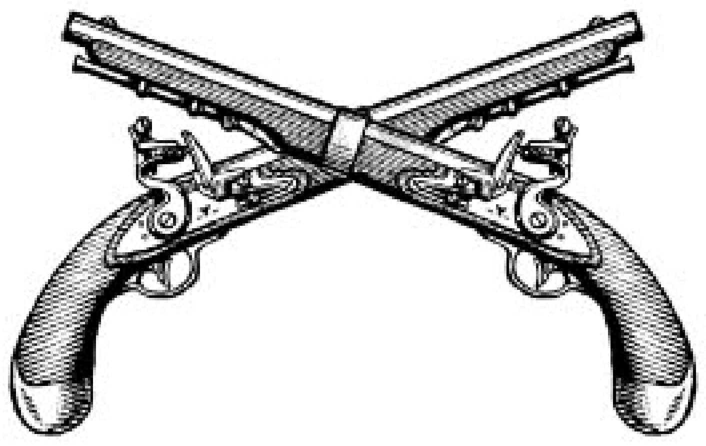
Even by the previous standards of the Indian Removal Act, the treaty that uprooted the Cherokee was dubious in its morality and legality. The Treaty of New Echota was accepted neither by the tribal leaders nor the majority of the Cherokee people, but was nevertheless enforced in 1838 by Andrew Jackson's successor, Martin Van Buren. Sadly a new president didn't mean a change in Native American fortunes. Having refused to recognise the terms of the deal, the Cherokee were first herded into internment camps for several months, before being forcibly marched from their lands by militia troops. Twelve wagon trains, each comprising about a thousand Cherokee, began the arduous trek in the winter of 1838. Their various routes encompassed trails through Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Missouri. Most of the Cherokee travelled barefoot.

Malnutrition, disease, pneumonia and exposure were rife on the journey. The summer in the camps had been one of blistering heat and severe drought, and the winter of that year was freakishly cold, making progress brutally slow (the 96 kilometres between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers alone took three months). The risk of the Cherokee bringing sickness to populations meant their journey was made even longer than it might have been, since they were forbidden from passing through towns or settlements and had to go around them. When they reached the Ohio river they were charged a dollar a head by the ferryman who usually only charged 12 cents. On the long wait to cross the river, many Cherokee died from exhaustion and starvation. Some were even murdered by locals.

The Cherokee finally reached their destination in Oklahoma in the early months of 1839. Between the internment camps and the journey itself, the estimated death toll was between 4,000 and 6,000.

Today, the Cherokee are the largest Native American group in the US, but the shameful ethnic cleansing of them and the other Civilised Tribes has not been forgotten. The 3,540-kilometre Trail of Tears National Historic Trail was opened in commemoration in 1987. The Five Tribes finally received a formal apology from the US Government in 2008.

©Alamy, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division



DAVY CROCKETT

Was Davy Crockett really the king of the wild frontier? Perhaps not, but he was certainly a legend in his own lifetime

David 'Davy' Crockett led an eventful life by almost anyone's standards. At various times he was a frontiersman, politician and soldier, and he was certainly a colourful character. But his fame during his lifetime and long afterwards isn't just down to his real achievements. The tall stories he told about himself – and encouraged others to invent – made him a folk hero and legend in his own lifetime. Even today, when historical researchers have uncovered much of the truth about Davy, many of his admirers still prefer the made-up versions.

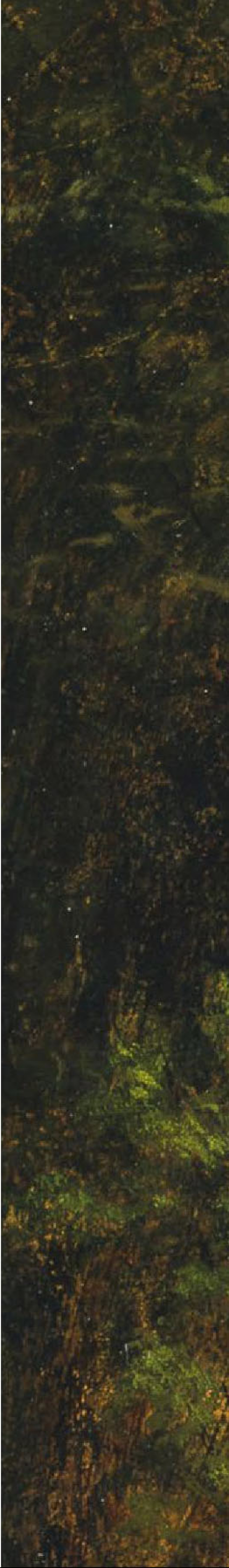
Davy was born in 1786, in a US state that no longer exists: the breakaway territory of Franklin, formerly considered part of North Carolina. Davy's father, John, was part of the strident movement trying to get Franklin officially recognised as the 14th State of America. The campaign was unsuccessful, however, and by the time Davy was 11 years old Franklin had been folded into the newly formed state of Tennessee. But the politicking that must have been the constant topic of conversation in the Crockett household clearly left an impression on the fifth of John and his wife Rebecca's nine children.

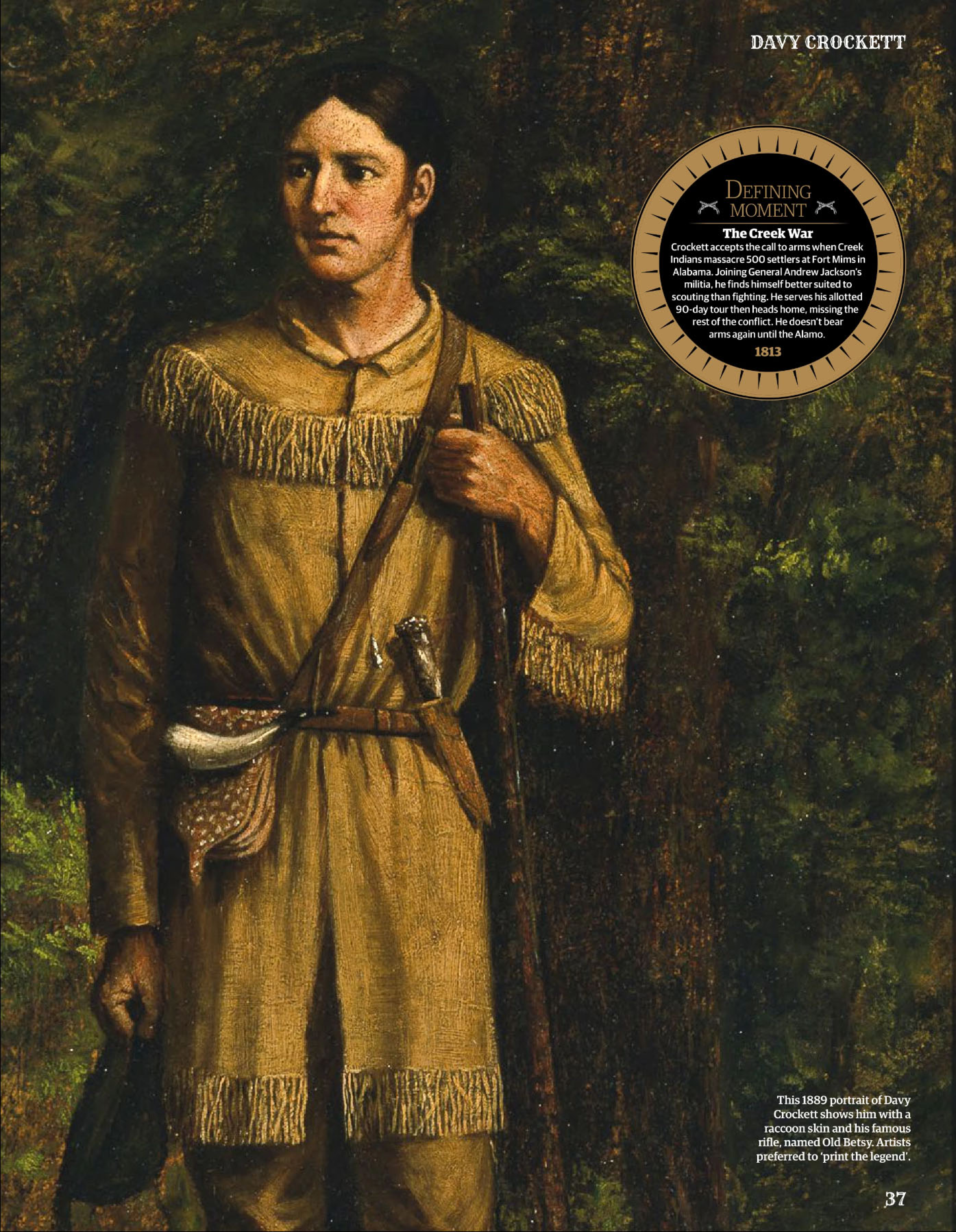
In the 20 years before he took up his own political office, Davy packed his life with experiences – some voluntary and others less so. Various financial calamities befell his family during his childhood, so he was forced to go out to work from the age of 12. His first job was as a cowboy on a 400-mile cattle drive to Virginia, and he undertook several similar journeys during the rest of his teens, although he also trained as a hatter for four years.

All of those jobs were in the service of paying off his father's debts, but John released him from his obligations in 1802, making Davy his own man for the first time. Two marriages and a brood of children followed, and he gained some notoriety as a bear hunter providing meat for his local community. But in 1813 the lure of action was enough to make him leave his family and enlist with General Andrew Jackson's militia for the violent campaign against the Creek Indians. He only signed up as a scout, though, and he missed all of the major battles.

His military stint earned him more respect in his Tennessee hometown when he returned to his farm, leading to his election as a justice of the peace in 1817. He'd never read a single law book and had rarely attended school, but his homespun wisdom and common-sense decisions when dealing with criminals made him a popular local figure, and none of his rulings were ever appealed.

His rise continued. In 1818, annoyed by the other candidates, he successfully campaigned to get himself elected as lieutenant colonel of his local militia regiment. Despite only holding the post for a couple of years, he used the 'Colonel' title for the rest of his life. He also became a local commissioner,





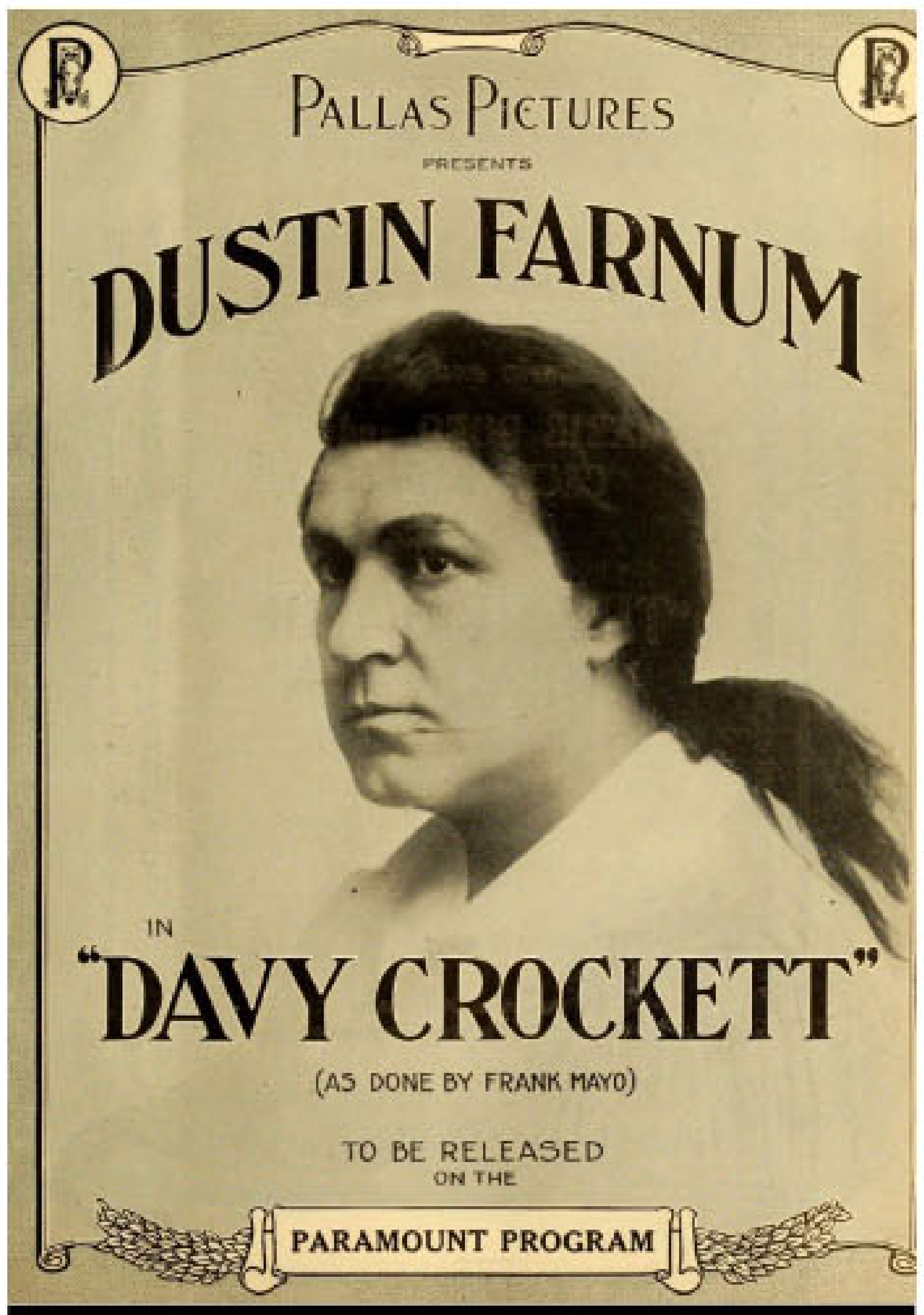
DEFINING MOMENT

The Creek War

Crockett accepts the call to arms when Creek Indians massacre 500 settlers at Fort Mims in Alabama. Joining General Andrew Jackson's militia, he finds himself better suited to scouting than fighting. He serves his allotted 90-day tour then heads home, missing the rest of the conflict. He doesn't bear arms again until the Alamo.

1813

This 1889 portrait of Davy Crockett shows him with a raccoon skin and his famous rifle, named Old Betsy. Artists preferred to 'print the legend'.



Poster for a 1916 Davy Crockett film starring Dustin Farnum. No known print of the film survives

Davy Crockett: Five facts

1 He married his second wife (the widow Elizabeth Patton) the same year his first (Polly Finley) died.

2 He caught malaria during the Creek War from wading around in mosquito-infested swamps hunting renegade Natives.

3 He tried to abolish the US Military Academy at West Point, New York, believing it a misuse of public money.

4 He witnessed an assassination attempt on President Andrew Jackson and helped tackle and disarm his would-be assailant.

5 Despite his folk hero status there, he only spent a total of three months in Texas.

helping make decisions in the running of the town and configuring the county boundaries. In 1821 he decided to run for the Tennessee state legislature, the campaign trail that began to see him honing his skills at spinning yarns, garnering him more widespread fame.

At local hustings he won over crowds with his garrulous nature and, reportedly, bribes of free drinks; there are several reports of him delivering a speech and then inviting an entire audience to a nearby bar to stop them staying to hear the next candidate. The legends continued to grow around him.

One popular story has him placing a bet with a barman that there'll be drinks all round if he can shoot a raccoon, which he duly achieves. He then keeps winning the same bet simply by stealing the dead raccoon back and giving it to the dim-witted barkeep again. Another time, he apparently stole his opponent's speech and delivered it first, leaving the other man with nothing to say. He claimed his smile was so dazzling that it could stun a raccoon so he didn't need to shoot it and that his prowess as a raccoon killer stemmed from a vow he made never to be fooled again after a wily raccoon outwitted him.

This good-old-boy persona was a hit with the voters, carrying him to the state legislature in 1823 and eventually, in 1827, to Congress. The uneducated, rough-and-ready frontiersman cut an odd figure in stuffy Washington.

In 1831, a satirical play called *The Lion Of The West* opened in New York to huge success. Everyone recognised its ridiculous hero, Nimrod Wildfire, as a parody of Crockett, but far from being offended, Crockett embraced the fun of the character and the popularity that came with it. Fact and fiction began to merge in the public consciousness. It was Nimrod Wildfire that wore the raccoon skin hat; Crockett probably never wore one in his life. And yet it's that hat in which Crockett immediately began to be depicted in popular culture. That image survives to this day.

DEFINING MOMENT

Crockett the Congressman

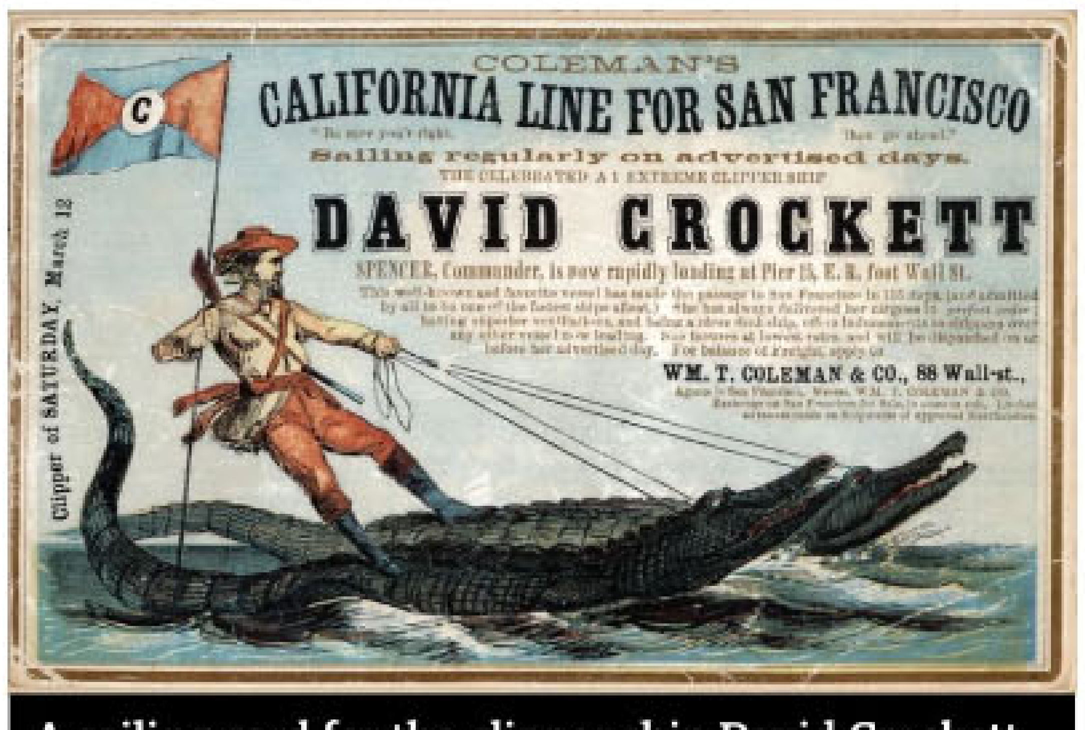
Crockett serves on the Committee of Propositions and Grievances, representing the rights of the people who voted for him: largely poor Tennessean pioneer farmers. Elected to Congress, he achieves little, antagonises many and loses the confidence of his own electorate when he votes against the Indian Removal Act.

1827

Crockett collaborated with the author Thomas Chilton in 1834 on an exaggerated autobiography, catchily titled *A Narrative Of The Life Of David Crockett Of The State Of Tennessee*. Apocryphal stories also started appearing in almanacs and dime novels about his adventures and his hunting and military prowess, and he undertook speaking tours. But this wasn't simple self-aggrandisement to play up his achievements.

The difference between Crockett's stories and someone like Buffalo Bill's is that Crockett's tall tales were tongue-in-cheek and couldn't possibly be believed. He sailed an alligator up the Niagara Falls, waded the Mississippi and jumped the Ohio; he was half horse; he rode a streak of lightning and broke the tail off Halley's comet. He even lit his pipe on the Sun.

Despite (or perhaps because of) his widespread celebrity, he was far from popular in Congress. Predictably something of a maverick, his fierce opposition to the Indian Removal Act and his championing of ordinary people's rights against wealthy business interests did not sit well with his colleagues and rivals. He made a lot of political enemies and failed to get a single law passed. Washington cared very little about treating Natives fairly or legislating for the poor. Andrew Jackson, by


COLEMAN'S
CALIFORNIA LINE FOR SAN FRANCISCO
Sailing regularly on advertised days.
DAVID CROCKETT
SPENCER, Commander, is now rapidly loading at Pier 15, E. R. foot Wall St.
WM. T. COLEMAN & CO., 88 Wall-st.,
Clipper of SATURDAY, March 12

A sailing card for the clipper ship David Crockett, depicting Davy sailing on two alligators (1855)

Timeline

1786

Davy Crockett is born
Not on a mountaintop (as the song goes) but in Greene County, Tennessee, not far east of Knoxville. His parents were pioneer farmers and tavern owners, but neither business was successful.

1798

The cowboy life
After some very cursory schooling, young Davy is sent out to work. His main jobs are as a cowboy, part of teams undertaking long cattle drives across the country.

1806

Davy's first marriage
Crockett marries Polly Finley despite the objections of her mother to the uncultured lout. They have three children: John Wesley Crockett, William Finley Crockett and Margaret Finley Crockett.

1812

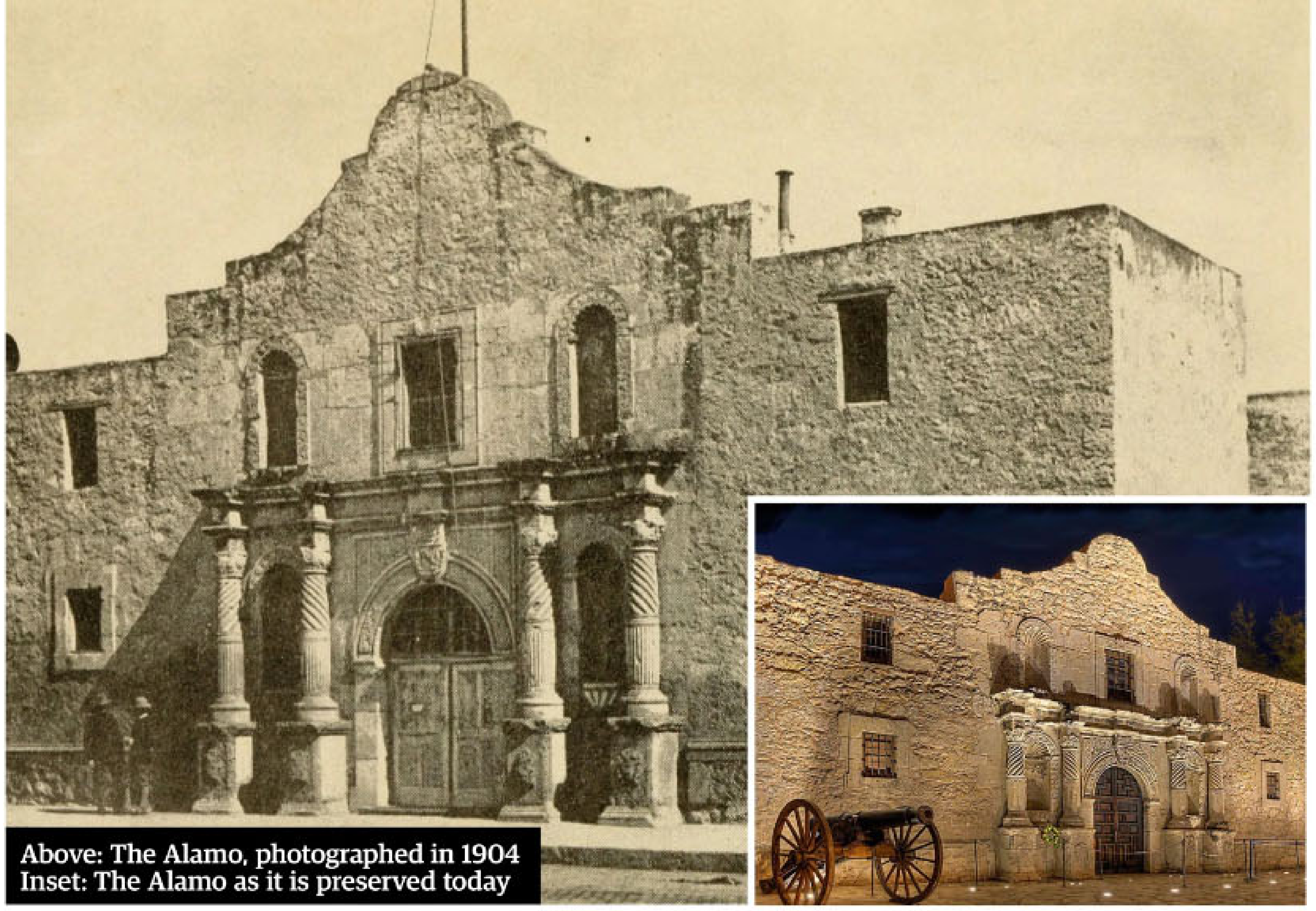
The great hunter
Crockett becomes a respected member of his community as an accomplished frontiersman and talented hunter. He claims to have killed 100 bears in a single season.

1815

Davy's second marriage
Crockett's second wife is the widow Elizabeth Patton. She already has two children (Margaret-Ann and George) and has three more with Crockett: Robert, Rebecca and Matilda.

1817

Justice of the peace
Crockett begins to develop a taste for politics at a local level after moving to Shoal Creek, Tennessee. He becomes the town's first lawman and excels at it.



Above: The Alamo, photographed in 1904
Inset: The Alamo as it is preserved today

then the seventh US president, became increasingly frustrated with this unruly congressman, and Crockett in turn became disappointed and disillusioned with the man he had once followed into the Creek War.

Crockett was finally defeated at the polls at the end of his second term in 1835. Restless, broke and with his political career over, he started to look for new opportunities and identified them out west, where miles of Texan land was ripe for the taking and tensions with Mexico were simmering.

By the time he got to Texas war with Mexico was looking increasingly likely, and Crockett was optimistic about the political role he might play in it. He swore an oath of allegiance to the provisional Government of Texas "or any future Republican government that may hereafter be dared" and embarked once again on a campaign trail (this time with an armed entourage), giving the rousing speeches he was now so renowned for.

Finally coming to a halt in San Antonio with a group of mounted volunteers, he was put in charge of the garrison, still expecting political rather than physical conflict. On February 23, 1836, however, the garrison was taken by surprise when it was ambushed by the Mexican Army led by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. The famous siege of San Antonio's Alamo mission ensued: 13 days of artillery bombardment ending in the Mexicans storming the complex. After 90 minutes of battle all of the Alamo's defenders, including Crockett, were dead.

Despite his violent end, Crockett lived on in popular culture. A play entitled *Davy Crockett*, or *Be Sure You're Right, Then Go Ahead* (one of his famous homilies) was staged in New York in 1872 and remained popular until the death of its principal actor, Frank Mayo, in 1896. In the 1950s, a successful Disney TV series sparked Crockett-mania, selling millions of records of its theme song and creating a huge demand for Crockett-themed children's toys and raccoon skin hats (the hats reached sales of 5,000 a day, raising the wholesale price of raccoon tails by 2,000 per cent). John Wayne played Crockett in the big-budget spectacular *The Alamo* in 1960, and Billy Bob Thornton took the role in the 2004 remake. 181 years after his violent demise, we remember the fictional Crockett more than the real one. He'd probably be delighted by that.

DEFINING MOMENT

Remember the Alamo

Seeking new opportunities, Crockett heads west to explore Texas and investigate the political situation regarding the brewing Texas Revolution. Signing an oath to the Provisional Government of Texas, he's made the leader of the Alamo garrison, and defends it against the two-week siege by Mexican General Santa Anna.

1836

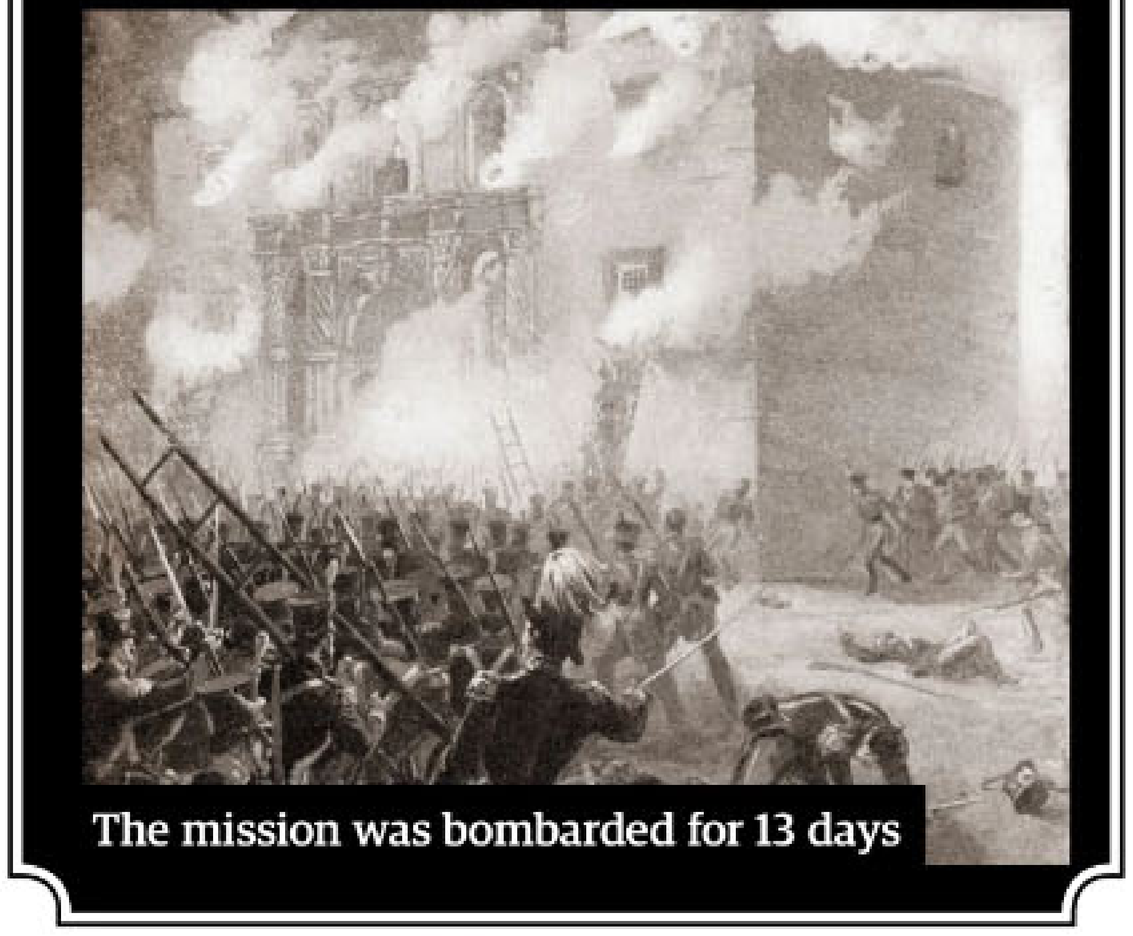
★ The death of Davy Crockett ★

Depending on whom you ask, Davy Crockett's death at the Alamo was either a heroic blaze of glory or a shameful defeat. The popular version, maintained by many of Crockett's defenders, particularly in Texas, where he remains a folk hero, is essentially the one depicted in the famous 1950s Disney TV series.

According to this story, Crockett, the last man standing at the battle, was finally overwhelmed by the Mexican hordes but went down fighting, swinging his rifle around him like a club because he was out of bullets. Lots of paintings and book covers depict him in this moment, encircled by heaps of Mexican bodies.

Historical research, however, suggests that Crockett surrendered and was taken prisoner along with other survivors of the siege. All were then executed when General Santa Anna refused clemency. Several eyewitness accounts attest to this - one even says Crockett tried to pretend to his captors that he was merely a tourist taking refuge in the Alamo when the fighting started.

However, those who prefer the former story point out that the only surviving eyewitnesses were Mexicans who wanted to smear Crockett's sterling reputation. Some historians have even faced abuse and death threats for daring to suggest the surrender story is true. Some truly die-hard Crockett fans even claim he wasn't killed at all.



The mission was bombarded for 13 days

1818

Lieutenant colonel of militia
Initially believing military ranks to be elitist, Crockett is persuaded to run for a top position in his local militia. He holds the commission for two years.

1821

Elected to state legislature
Crockett becomes a commissioner in Lawrenceburg, Virginia, and is then asked to run for Tennessee legislature, meaning he'll be responsible for decisions at state level. He wins the vote.

1831

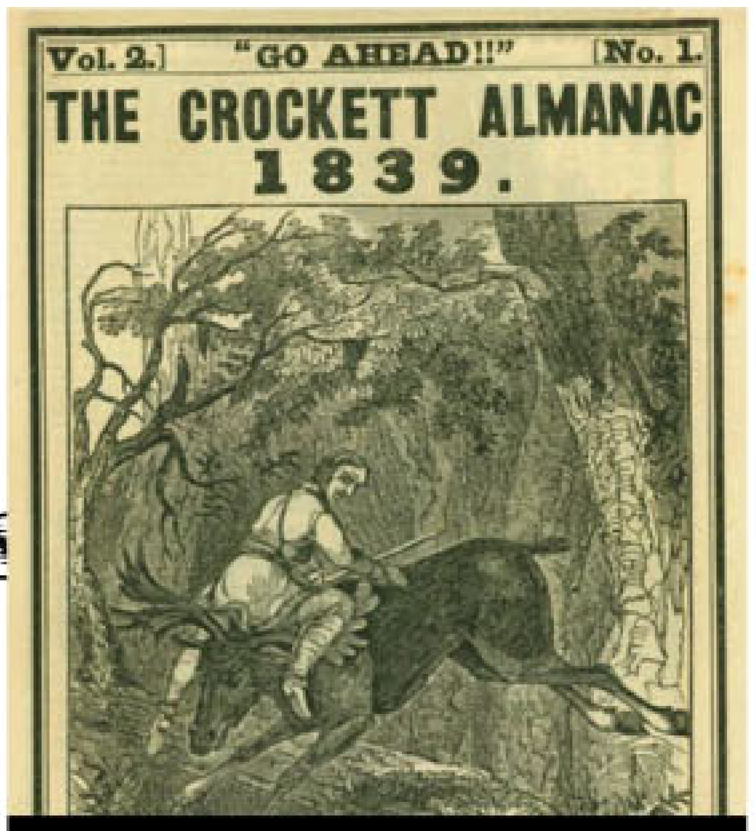
Lion of the West
Crockett's larger-than-life personality is parodied in a popular play in New York. Crockett enjoys the attention and endorses the play. Other fictional representations of him follow.

1834

Crockett's own story
Crockett seeks to rein in the mythology and set the record straight with his own autobiography. It's less outlandish than some Crockett yarns but still quite liberal with the truth.

1835

Out of office
Having failed to pass a single piece of legislation in Congress, Crockett loses the election at the end of his second term. He is defeated by William Fitzgerald.



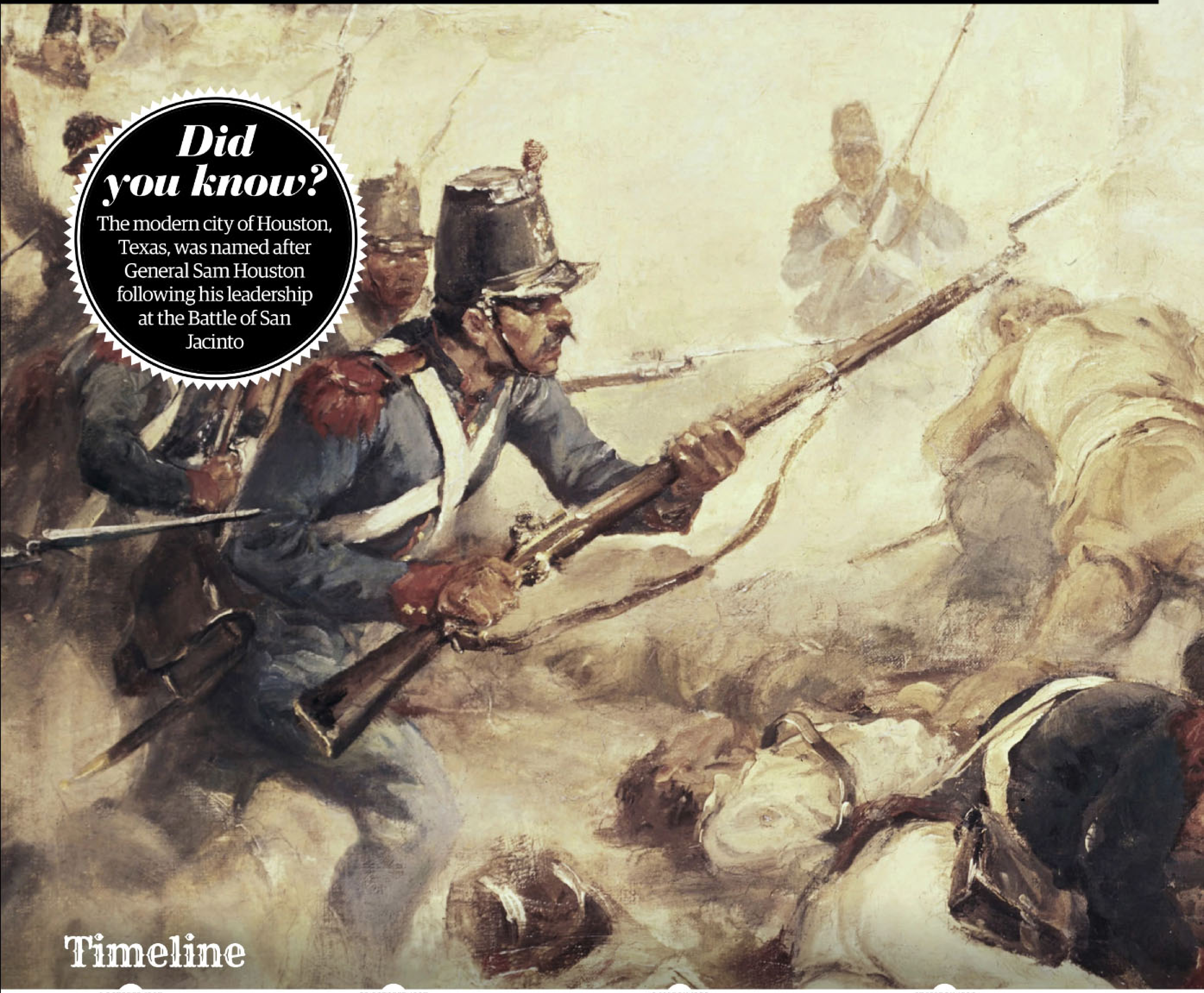
Vol. 2.] "GO AHEAD!!" [No. 1.
THE CROCKETT ALMANAC
1839.

An issue of the *Crockett Almanac*, 1839. "Adventure, Exploits, Sprees and Scrapes in the West"

©Alamy, Thinkstock, Wiki: Danphotoman777

Bluffer's Guide MEXICO, 2 OCTOBER 1835 - 21 APRIL 1836

THE TEXAS REVOLUTION



Did you know?

The modern city of Houston, Texas, was named after General Sam Houston following his leadership at the Battle of San Jacinto

Timeline

2 OCTOBER 1835

COME AND TAKE IT

Though little more than a skirmish, the Battle of Gonzales marks the first official conflict of the revolution, ending in a Texian victory.

23 OCTOBER 1835

CONSTITUCION FEDERAL
DE LOS
ESTADOS UNIDOS MEXICANOS
1824

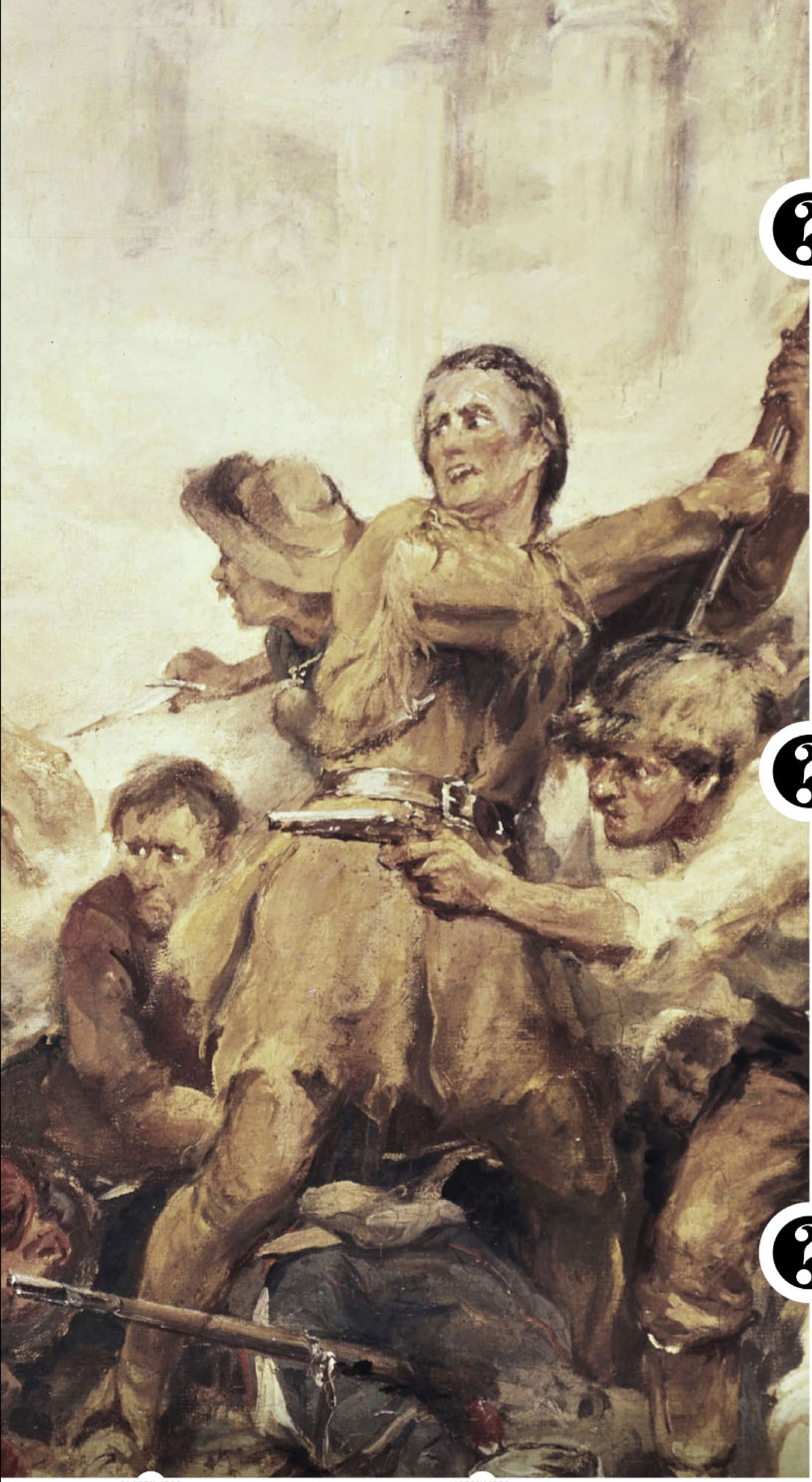
After months of manoeuvring, the Constitution of 1824 is overturned, and in December the Siete Leyes are enacted, underlining the validity of the Texian cause.

6 MARCH 1836

After holding out for 13 days against vastly superior numbers, Texian forces are overrun and slaughtered at the Battle of the Alamo.

27 MARCH 1836

On the orders of Santa Anna, hundreds of Texian prisoners are massacred at Goliad following their surrender at the Battle of Coleto Creek.



What was it?

In protest at legislative changes made by the federal government, residents of the Mexican province of Texas took up arms in late 1835 and expelled the region's federal troops. Shortly after, the Consultation (a provisional Texian government) was assembled to oversee the burgeoning revolution, and determine its goals – a return to the Mexican Constitution of 1824 or independence.

Angered by the rebellion, President Antonio López de Santa Anna opted to personally lead a military force to retake Texas, entering the province in early 1836. The cruelty shown by the Mexican army caused swathes of civilians to flee before them, an exodus known as the Runaway Scrape, and ultimately won more sympathy for the revolutionaries' cause. The decisive conflict came at the Battle of San Jacinto, where Santa Anna was captured following a surprise attack. The Texian army emerged victorious after just 18 minutes.

The revolution left Texas as an independent republic, though Mexico refused to recognise it as such. This state of affairs, which would exist for almost a decade, culminated in annexation by the United States and the outbreak of the Mexican-American War.

Why did it happen?

There were a number of factors that contributed to the outbreak of the Texas Revolution, but chief among them was a cultural and political disconnect between the Anglo-American population of the region, and the Mexican government. After winning independence in 1821, Mexico relaxed regulations on colonists or 'empresarios', which allowed thousands of settlers to move to Texas from the southern United States. The end result was a region where Anglo-American Texians outnumbered the Spanish and Mexican Tejanos.

The final straw came with the introduction of the 'Siete Leyes' (Seven Laws) in 1835. This legislation radically changed the governmental structure of Mexico, but their most salient consequence was the further centralisation of political power under Santa Anna. Reaction to these changes in Texas was overwhelmingly negative, and effectively lit the revolutionary touch paper, though it's safe to say that revolution had already become a case of 'when' and not 'if'.

Who was involved?

Antonio López de Santa Anna

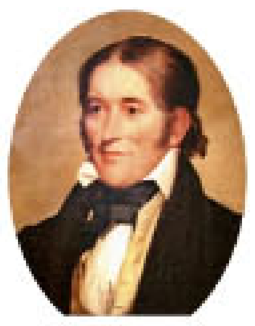
21 February 1794 - 21 June 1876

President of Mexico, Santa Anna personally led the Mexican Army during the revolution and was ultimately captured at San Jacinto.

Sam Houston

2 March 1793 - 26 July 1863

Leader of the Texian army, Houston successfully led his forces in the Battle of San Jacinto to clinch victory for the revolutionaries.



Davy Crockett

17 August 1786 - 6 March 1836

A famed American frontiersman and politician, Crockett passed into folklore thanks to his heroic death at the Battle of the Alamo.

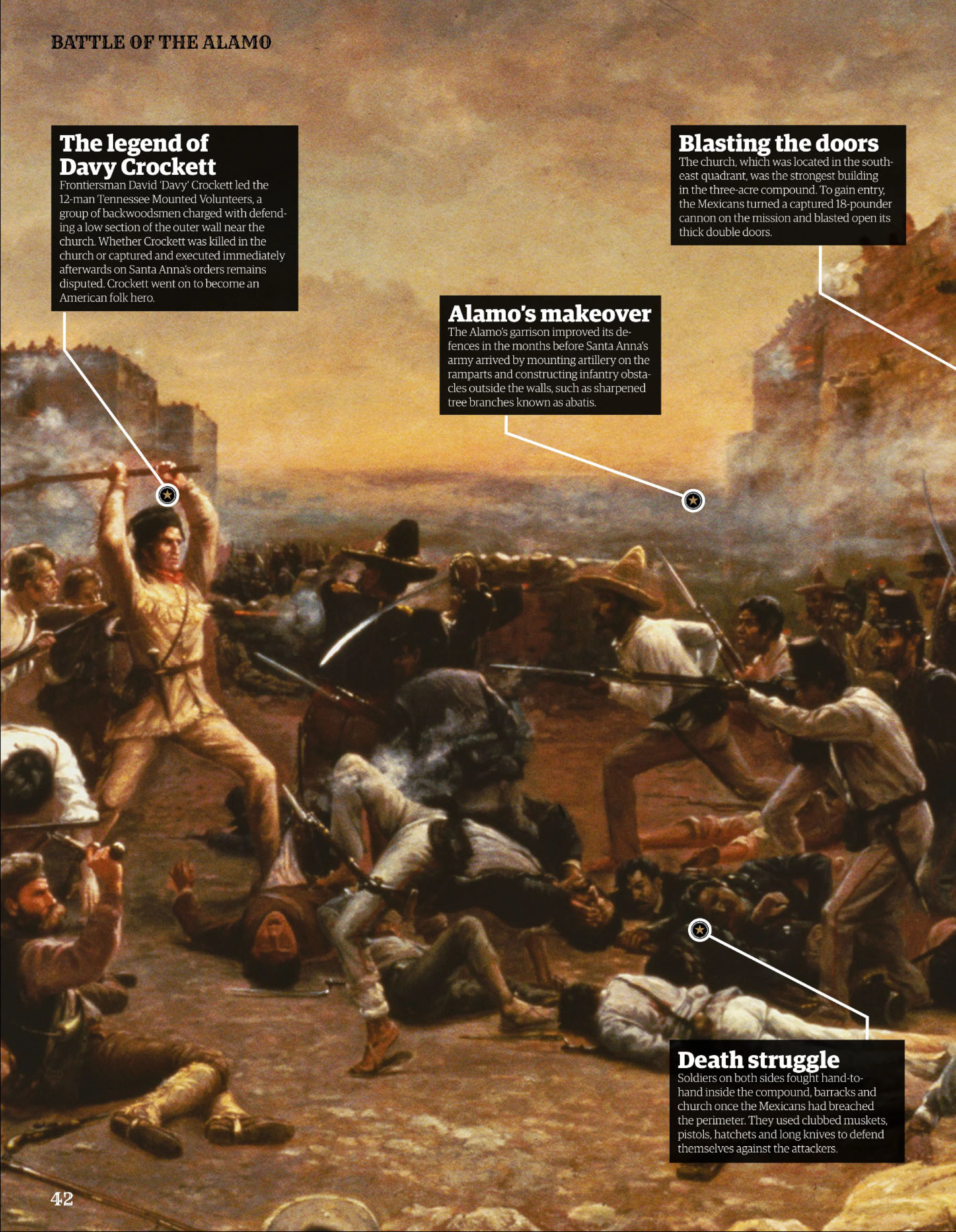
21 APRIL 1836

Texian forces rout the Mexican army in the decisive Battle of San Jacinto, the final major armed conflict of the Texas Revolution. Santa Anna is taken prisoner.

14 MAY 1836

The Treaties of Velasco are signed by the captured Santa Anna, ending hostilities, though they are not officially ratified by the Mexican government.

©NARA, Getty, Library of Congress; Prints & Photographs Division, Wiki; Cliff1060, PG150



The legend of Davy Crockett

Frontiersman David 'Davy' Crockett led the 12-man Tennessee Mounted Volunteers, a group of backwoodsmen charged with defending a low section of the outer wall near the church. Whether Crockett was killed in the church or captured and executed immediately afterwards on Santa Anna's orders remains disputed. Crockett went on to become an American folk hero.

Blasting the doors

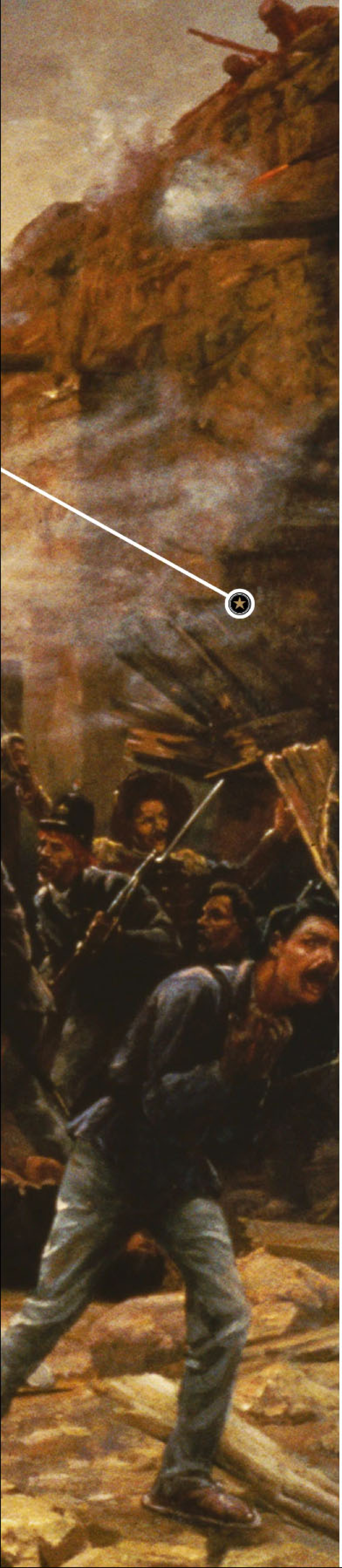
The church, which was located in the southeast quadrant, was the strongest building in the three-acre compound. To gain entry, the Mexicans turned a captured 18-pounder cannon on the mission and blasted open its thick double doors.

Alamo's makeover

The Alamo's garrison improved its defences in the months before Santa Anna's army arrived by mounting artillery on the ramparts and constructing infantry obstacles outside the walls, such as sharpened tree branches known as abatis.

Death struggle

Soldiers on both sides fought hand-to-hand inside the compound, barracks and church once the Mexicans had breached the perimeter. They used clubbed muskets, pistols, hatchets and long knives to defend themselves against the attackers.



BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

SAN ANTONIO DE BÉXAR, MEXICAN TEXAS 6 MARCH 1836

The Mexican Army's assault on the Mission San Antonio de Valero inadvertently began when an overly enthusiastic soldier shouted in the pre-dawn darkness: "Viva Santa Anna!" The cry spread through the ranks and bugles officially sounded the attack. Bathed in moonlight, 1,000 Mexicans surged towards the old Spanish mission-turned-fort known as the Alamo.

'Santa Anna' was Antonio López de Santa Anna, a Mexican general whose fight for independence from Spain was rewarded when he was elected president in 1833. Unfortunately, what began as a promise to unite the nation soon turned into chaos. During his second year in power, he revoked Mexico's constitution, purged the state militia and crushed all opposition. He then turned his attention north.

A decade before Santa Anna came to power, the Mexican government had allowed Americans to immigrate to the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas, and thousands did. However, Santa Anna didn't like the fact that the 'norteamericanos' heavily outnumbered the Mexicans in the state and feared that the US would try to annex it. He deliberately provoked the settlers, known as Texians, into rebellion by demanding they convert to Catholicism, enforcing a previously ignored stipulation in their original immigration contracts.

The first shots of the Texan Revolution were fired in the town of Gonzales on 2 October 1835 when Texians fired on a Mexican force under General Martín de Cos. The Mexicans retreated to San Antonio de Béxar, where the Alamo was located, but the Texians drove them out two months later. Rather than return home, some of the Texians garrisoned the Alamo.

Following de Cos' defeat, Santa Anna led a 6,000-strong army to stamp out the rebellion, besieging the Alamo on 23 February 1836. When the troops there refused to surrender, Santa Anna ordered his men to raise a blood-red flag within sight of the fort. Its message was simple: no quarter.

When Santa Anna arrived, the Alamo's small garrison was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Travis, a Texian army officer. Santa Anna's first move was to have his men dig siege trenches to protect his artillery as it was moved closer to the fort in order to breach or weaken the north wall in preparation for an infantry assault. It was a slow process, but by 5 March they had advanced the guns to within 75 yards of their target. Travis' men did their best to shore up the walls each night.

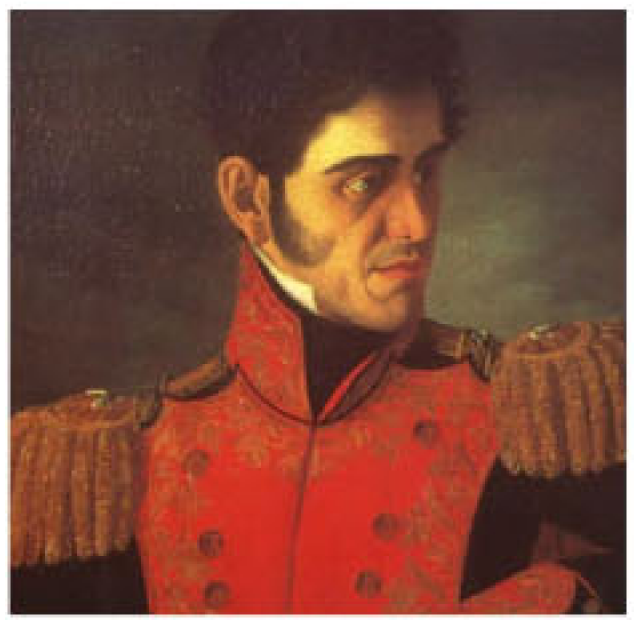
Because he probably feared the arrival of a relief army, Santa Anna issued orders for a pre-dawn assault on 6 March, even though the north wall was still intact. The initial attack stalled due to the fort's defensive fire, but when Santa Anna committed his reinforcements they overpowered the Americans.

Traditional reports hold that no prisoners were taken. However, a contemporary account by Mexican Lieutenant Colonel Enrique de la Peña – a supposed eyewitness – that surfaced more than a century after the battle claims that seven prisoners were taken by Santa Anna and executed by sword. Traditionalists hold that it does not change the fact that all of the defenders were slain that morning.

'Remember the Alamo' became a rallying cry throughout the Texian Army. On 21 April 1836, they won the Battle of San Jacinto, captured Santa Anna and forced him and his troops back across the Rio Grande, assuring Texas' independence.

MEXICAN ARMY OF OPERATIONS

TROOPS 6,000
CANNONS 21



ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE SANTA ANNA

LEADER

A shrewd politician and bold commander steeped in the Napoleonic tradition who excelled at administrative planning and logistics.

Strengths Knew the value of a rapid march and surprise.

Weakness Used terror as a weapon to intimidate the enemy.

PERMANENTES (REGULARS)

KEY UNIT

They possessed an esprit de corps that was an essential quality for assault troops.

Strengths Line troops of various types, including light troops, grenadiers and sappers.

Weakness Lacked skill and proficiency with their rifles.

INDIA PATTERN ENFIELD MUSKET

KEY WEAPON

The .75 calibre Brown Bess had good range and accuracy for a smoothbore musket.

Strengths A robust, durable firearm that could perform well in harsh environments.

Weakness The Mexicans used low-quality gunpowder that compromised the gun's performance.

🟥 Phase 1
⬜ Phase 2
🟩 Phase 3

01 Stretch the defences

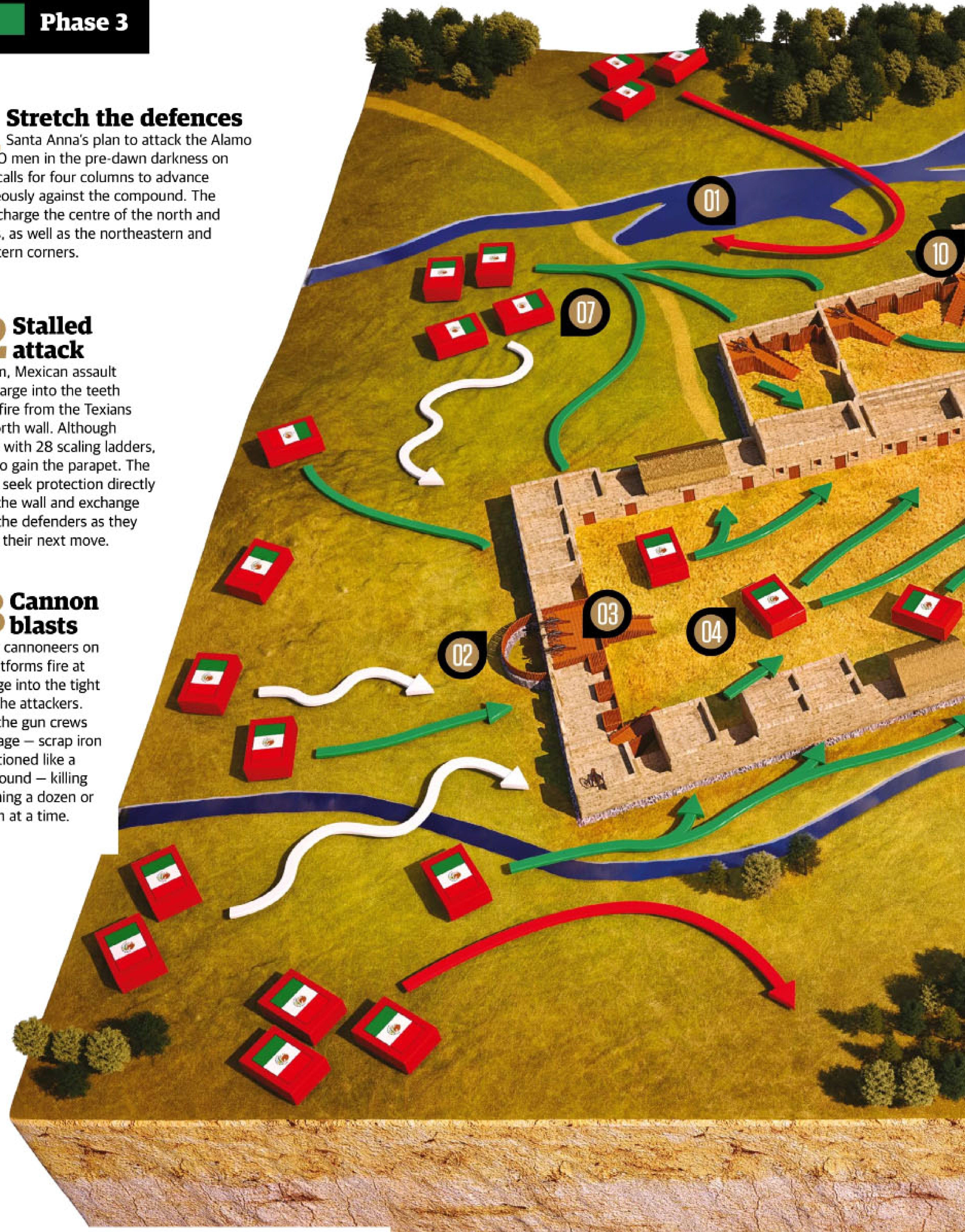
Santa Anna's plan to attack the Alamo with 1,700 men in the pre-dawn darkness on 6 March calls for four columns to advance simultaneously against the compound. The columns charge the centre of the north and east walls, as well as the northeastern and southeastern corners.

02 Stalled attack

At 5.30am, Mexican assault troops charge into the teeth of heavy fire from the Texians on the north wall. Although equipped with 28 scaling ladders, they fail to gain the parapet. The Mexicans seek protection directly beneath the wall and exchange fire with the defenders as they mull over their next move.

03 Cannon blasts

American cannoneers on raised platforms fire at close range into the tight ranks of the attackers. Some of the gun crews use langrage – scrap iron that functioned like a canister round – killing and maiming a dozen or more men at a time.

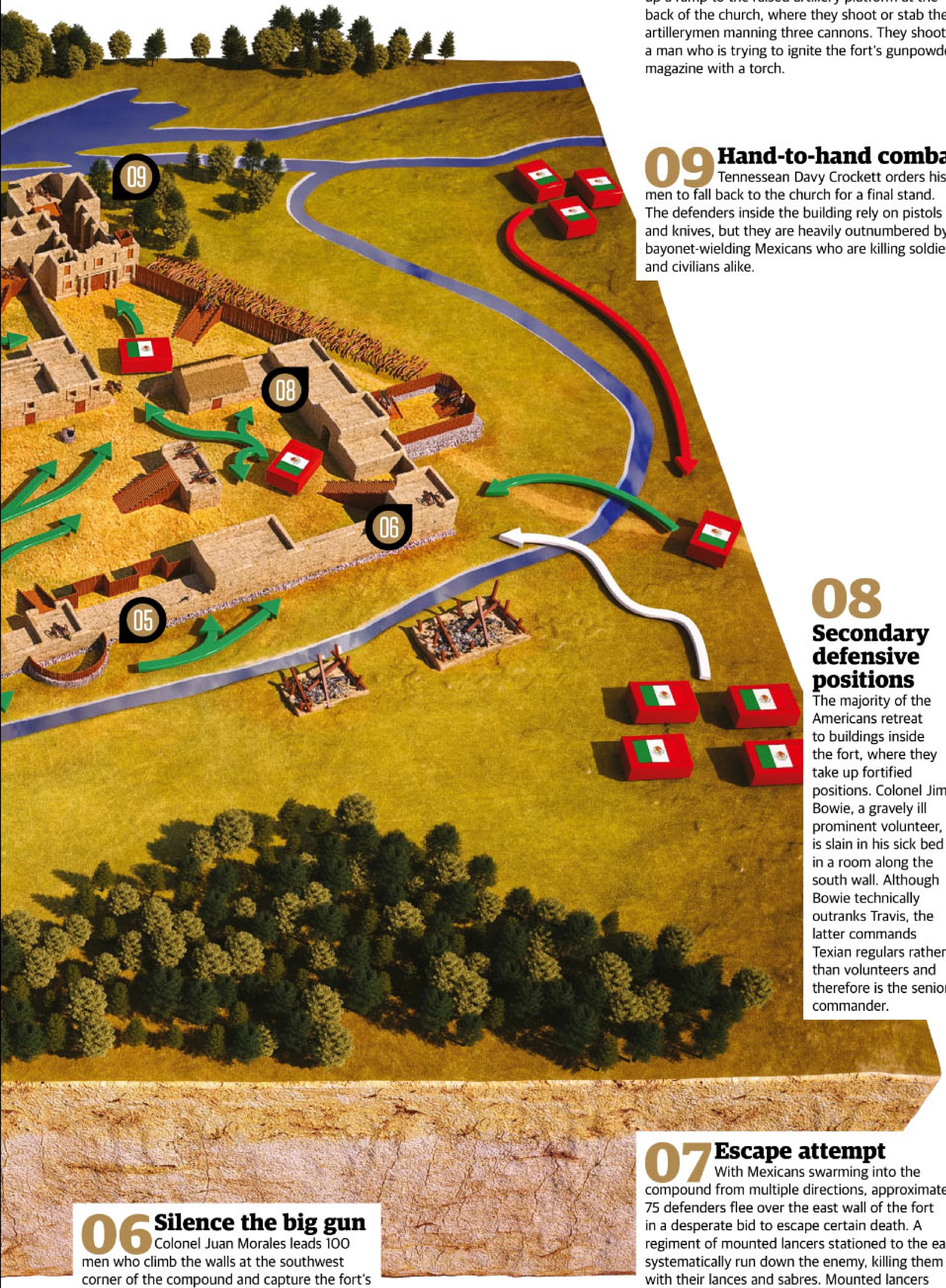


04 Reinforcements to the rescue

Although all four attacks falter in the face of the defenders' well-aimed fire, Santa Anna commits his reserves in an all-out effort to breach the north wall. General Juan Amador, leader of the reinforcements, climbs over the wall with some of his men, one of whom opens a door in the north wall. Mexican troops pour into the compound, forcing the Texians to abandon the walls and retreat to final stands in the church and barracks.

05 Bring your axe

General Martín de Cos' men fan out along the lightly defended west wall, where they use axes to smash their way through doors and windows to gain entry into the compound.



06 Silence the big gun

Colonel Juan Morales leads 100 men who climb the walls at the southwest corner of the compound and capture the fort's only 18-pounder cannon before the Texians can spike it. The bulk of his troops fan out through the southern half of the compound.

07 Escape attempt

With Mexicans swarming into the compound from multiple directions, approximately 75 defenders flee over the east wall of the fort in a desperate bid to escape certain death. A regiment of mounted lancers stationed to the east systematically run down the enemy, killing them with their lances and sabres. Mounted lancers from other parts of the perimeter arrive to help hunt down the escapees and ensure that they are all caught.

08 Secondary defensive positions

The majority of the Americans retreat to buildings inside the fort, where they take up fortified positions. Colonel Jim Bowie, a gravely ill prominent volunteer, is slain in his sick bed in a room along the south wall. Although Bowie technically outranks Travis, the latter commands Texian regulars rather than volunteers and therefore is the senior commander.

09 Hand-to-hand combat

Tennessean Davy Crockett orders his men to fall back to the church for a final stand. The defenders inside the building rely on pistols and knives, but they are heavily outnumbered by bayonet-wielding Mexicans who are killing soldiers and civilians alike.

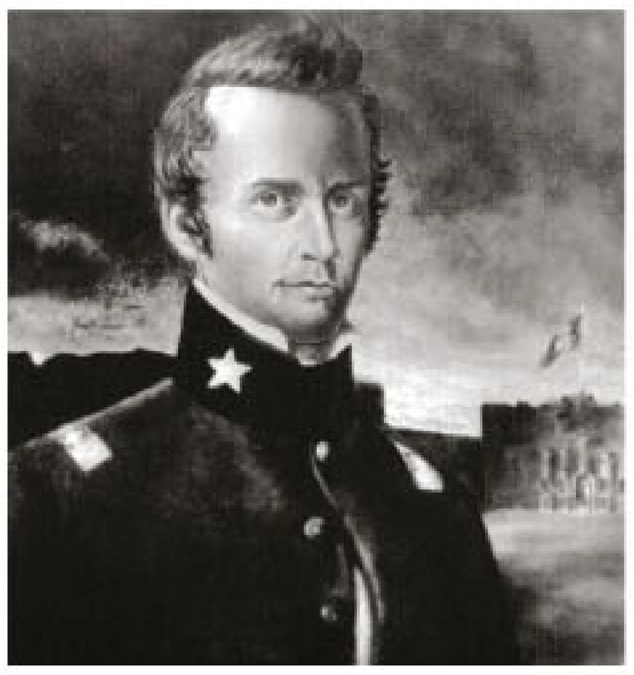
10 Big explosion averted

A group of Mexican soldiers charge up a ramp to the raised artillery platform at the back of the church, where they shoot or stab the artillerymen manning three cannons. They shoot a man who is trying to ignite the fort's gunpowder magazine with a torch.

1824

TEXIAN ARMY

TROOPS 189
CANNONS 21



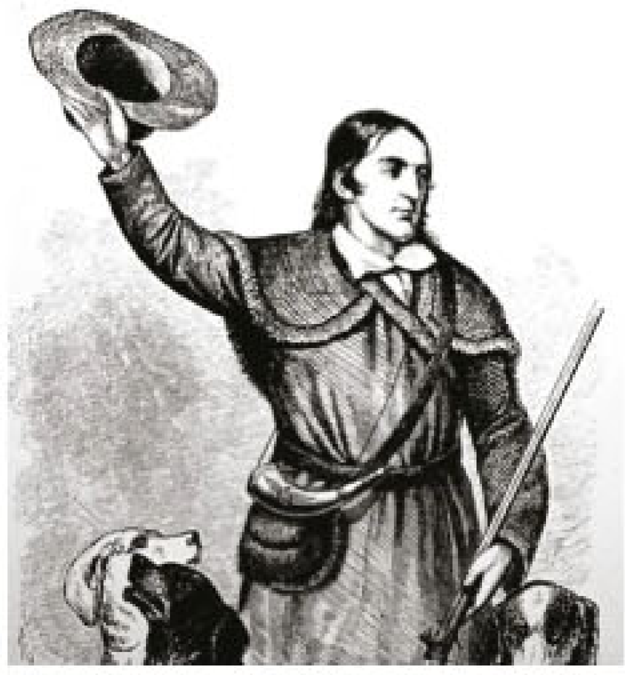
LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM B TRAVIS

LEADER

A well-educated lawyer who sought to obtain larger numbers of reinforcements to no avail.

Strengths Diligent, methodical and fearless when faced with overwhelming odds.

Weaknesses Moody, vain and inexperienced in field command.



CROCKETT'S TENNESSEE MOUNTED VOLUNTEERS

KEY UNIT

Their experience on the frontier fighting Natives made them resilient soldiers.

Strengths They fought with extraordinary ferocity.

Weaknesses As citizen-soldiers, they were sometimes prone to disobeying commands.

LONG RIFLE

KEY WEAPON

Sharpshooters relied on its superb accuracy to pick off enemy artillerymen during the siege.

Strengths A highly effective long-range rifle.

Weaknesses Slower to reload than a smoothbore musket.

© Alamy, Getty Images, Nicholas Forder

WAGONS WEST

RIDING THE OREGON TRAIL

Journalist and politician Horace Greeley famously stated "Go West, young man." He had no idea just how arduous and dangerous a trip he was suggesting

The Oregon Trail is another hallmark of the Old West. Between the mid 1830s and the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, some 400,000 people used it, vastly accelerating expansion of the western frontier. Starting as a motley collection of dirt tracks passable only on foot or horseback, it grew into a spider's web of wagon trails, way stations, forts and towns linking numerous Midwestern states.

Starting out in Missouri, at its peak the trail linked Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Idaho and Oregon itself with California, where it linked up with the California Trail among others. Some of today's major roads still follow parts of the trail.

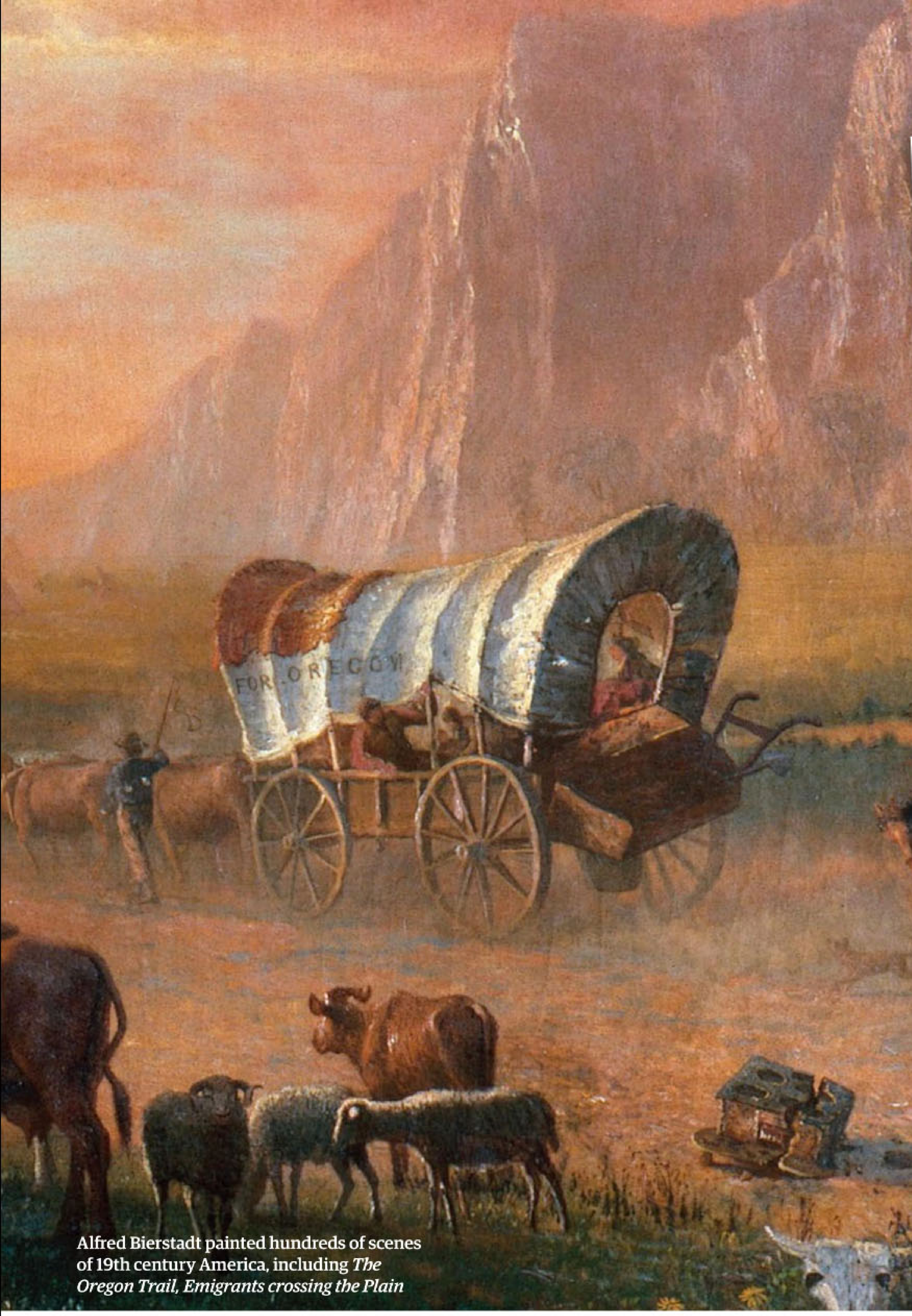
Originally the trail was the domain of trappers and hunters. At its peak, however, it was used by explorers, ranchers, hunters, trappers, pioneers, missionaries and businessmen, all hoping to start new lives and perhaps make their fortunes. Whatever it was they were looking for, many would find death and tragedy instead.

Some reached their destinations safely and even prospered. Others arrived, but achieved little other than surviving the trip, while some simply gave up on their original destinations, settling down along the way rather than continue. For the rest, only death awaited them. Hostile natives, disease, starvation, outlaws and accidents left graves marking the Oregon Trail like milestones.

The 'Great Migration of 1843' was a particular high point, some 1,000 people departing aboard a huge wagon train. After reaching Fort Hall, Idaho they were told by their guide that, from then on, the trail was impassable to wagons and they should use pack animals instead. Their leader, Marcus Whitman, disagreed. He and many of the pioneers believed that a wagon trail could be made, if necessary by clearing forest and levelling a track as they went. Whitman and his followers were right.

They managed to cut a route through Oregon's heavily forested Blue Mountains before meeting the then-impassable obstacle of Mount Hood. Bypassing the mountain, sending the wagons down the Columbia River and the animals via the Lolo Pass, almost all of the travellers successfully arrived in the Willamette Valley in October 1843. The Oregon Trail had been created.

One of the largest groups to use it was the Mormons. They came in their thousands to live together as a homogeneous group. Early Mormon settlers were responsible for finding suitable places, then building farms and homes to accommodate their brethren as they arrived. Mormons came from all over the country, their leader Brigham Young choosing the Salt Lake Valley in Utah as their main base. Some Mormons, however, settled in other



Alfred Bierstadt painted hundreds of scenes of 19th century America, including *The Oregon Trail, Emigrants crossing the Plain*

OREGON TRAIL MEMORIAL
TO ALL PIONEER
WHO PASSED THIS
TO WIN AND HOLD TH
TRAIL CROSSED
ONE MILE SOUTH OF TH
ERECTED BY

Fort Laramie was an important staging post for pioneers along the trail. This memorial commemorates those who died on the trail

Sited in The Dalles, Oregon, this marks the official end of the Oregon Trail. Other trails continued further into California

- ☞ The eastern section of the Oregon Trail linked to the California, Mormon and Bozeman Trails, all major routes.
- ☞ One of the busiest departure points for the Oregon Trail was St Joseph, Missouri, home of the Pony Express.
- ☞ Lacking their own supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables, travellers ate trailside fruits and berries to ward off scurvy.
- ☞ The trails were commonly used for mass cattle drives, ranchers moving livestock wherever the best prices were found.

places. One of them, store owner and newspaper publisher Samuel Brannan, settled in California and was to cause a massive rise in traffic via the trail. It was Brannan's newspaper, the *California Star*, that publicised a momentous discovery – gold.

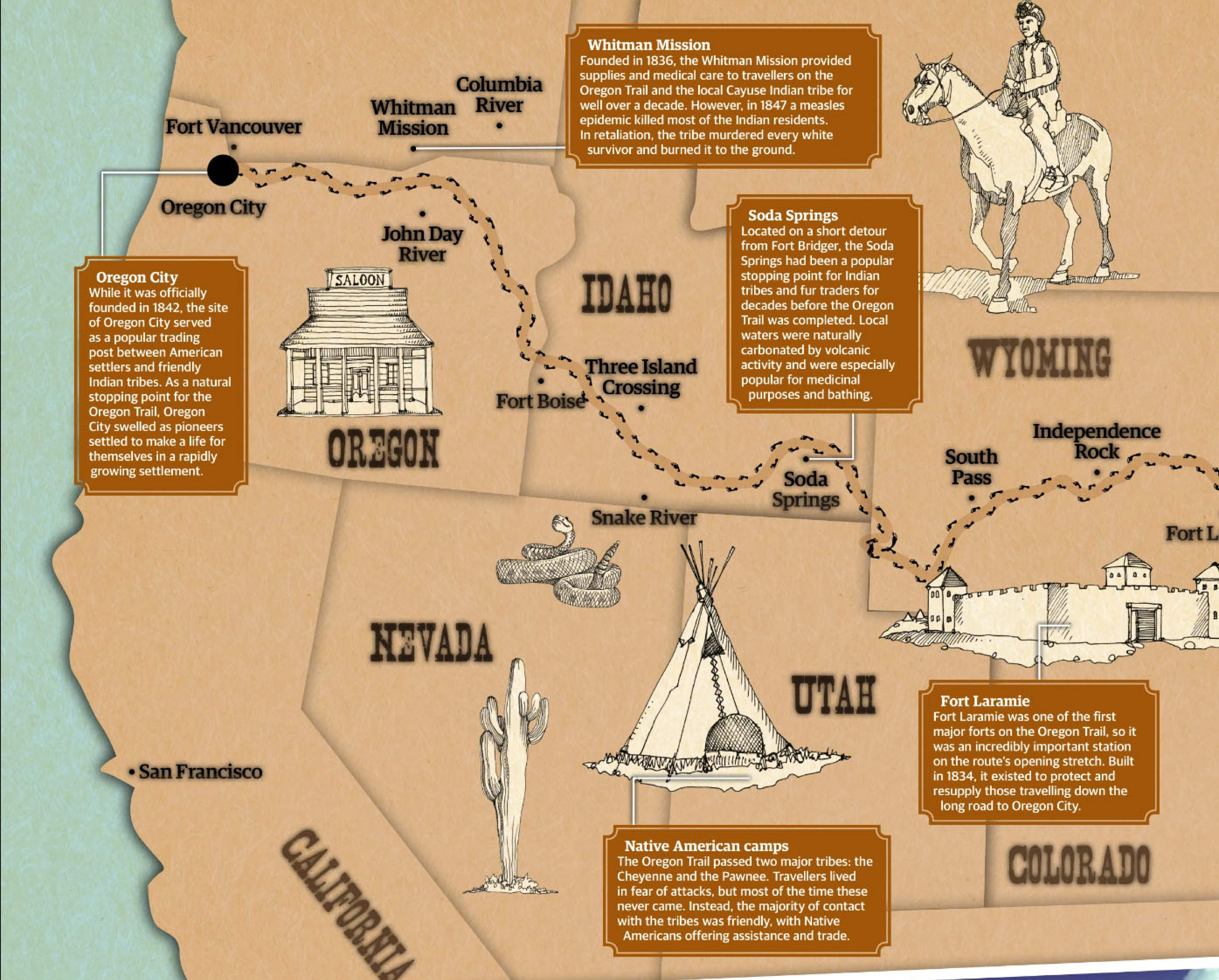
The 1848 California Gold Rush was another major source of travellers. With such huge amounts seemingly there for the taking, people travelled from all over the world seeking their fortunes. Those travelling from Europe and wanting to avoid a risky boat journey round Cape Horn or via Panama used the trail. With endless wild stories of gold so plentiful it could simply be picked up from riverbeds and streams, many thousands headed for California. 'Gold fever' proved even more contagious than cholera.

In 1849 cholera also struck the US. Thousands died on the trail west, especially along the Platte River between 1849 and 1855 during the 'epidemic years.' With little understanding of how cholera spread or how to treat it, parts of the trail were natural breeding grounds. Kansas, Nebraska and Wyoming were the last resting places for many who sought fame and fortune, with their unmarked graves left lining the trail.

The most basic essentials for trail travellers were food, water and transport. Transport involved horses, pack mules, oxen and wagons. Each had their own particular difficulties. Mules weren't the most co-operative of creatures, especially carrying loads of over 45 kilograms up steep hills and through mountainous country. Horses and oxen had to be shod. Wagons needed to be repaired on the trail, requiring spare parts and tools for the job.

Water had to be found along the way, not always possible or safe. Finding rivers, ponds and streams was sometimes difficult. Finding water that was safe for drinking and cooking was even harder. With little knowledge of waterborne diseases and large numbers of people living with poor sanitation, cholera was a constant threat.

Food was basic. Meat could be bought before departure and hunted along the trail, where it could be found. Hardtack biscuits, salted pork and bacon, beans, dried fruit, pickles, bread and rice were staple supplies. To make meals less monotonous sugar, tea, coffee, dried vegetables and small amounts of spices and maple syrup supplemented their diet. If a wagon train got lost or scattered by, say, a native raid, entire wagon trains could starve out on the plains. For this reason, experienced guides were well worth their exorbitant fees.



Whitman Mission
Founded in 1836, the Whitman Mission provided supplies and medical care to travellers on the Oregon Trail and the local Cayuse Indian tribe for well over a decade. However, in 1847 a measles epidemic killed most of the Indian residents. In retaliation, the tribe murdered every white survivor and burned it to the ground.

Oregon City
While it was officially founded in 1842, the site of Oregon City served as a popular trading post between American settlers and friendly Indian tribes. As a natural stopping point for the Oregon Trail, Oregon City swelled as pioneers settled to make a life for themselves in a rapidly growing settlement.

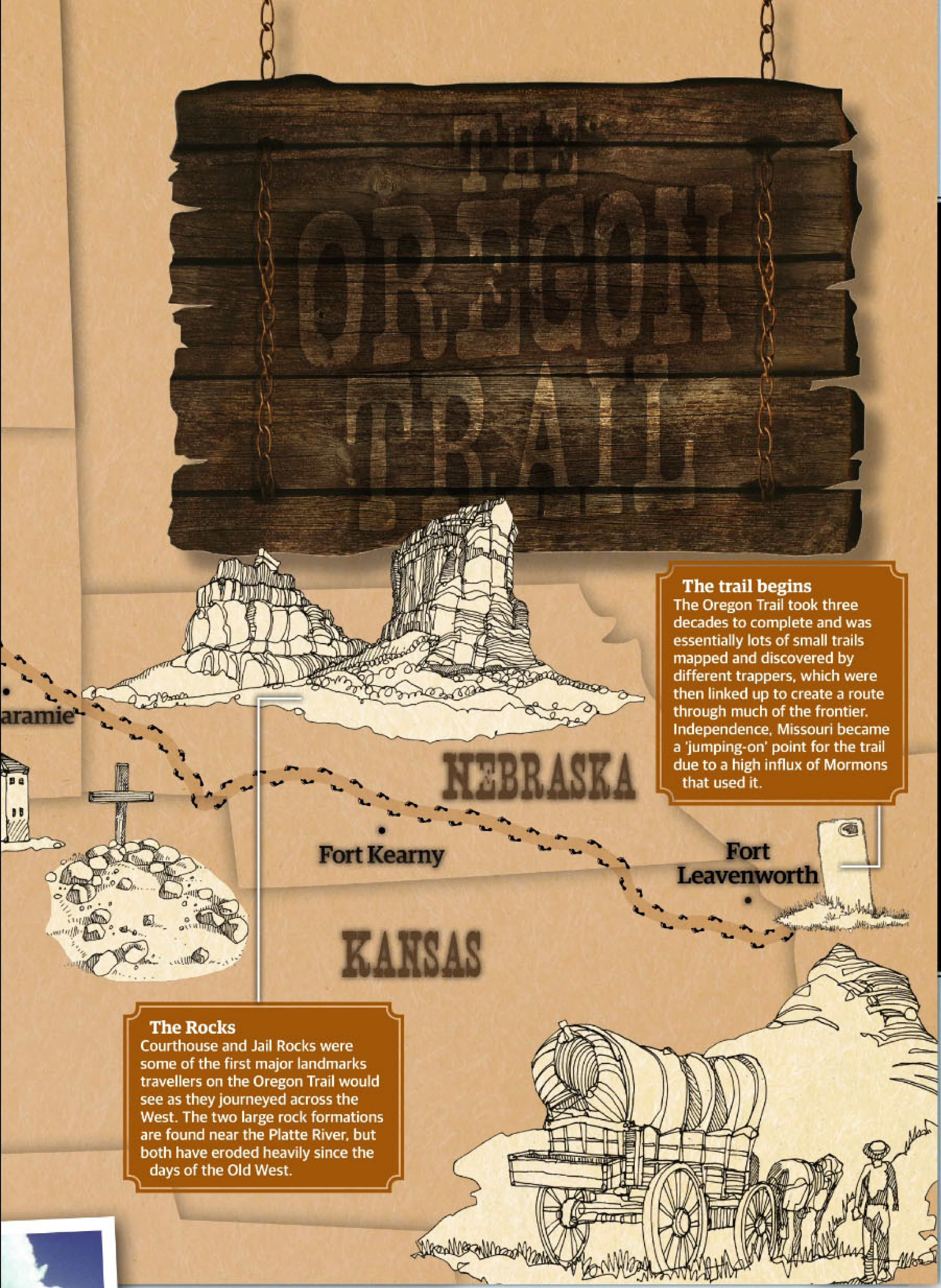
Soda Springs
Located on a short detour from Fort Bridger, the Soda Springs had been a popular stopping point for Indian tribes and fur traders for decades before the Oregon Trail was completed. Local waters were naturally carbonated by volcanic activity and were especially popular for medicinal purposes and bathing.

Fort Laramie
Fort Laramie was one of the first major forts on the Oregon Trail, so it was an incredibly important station on the route's opening stretch. Built in 1834, it existed to protect and resupply those travelling down the long road to Oregon City.

Native American camps
The Oregon Trail passed two major tribes: the Cheyenne and the Pawnee. Travellers lived in fear of attacks, but most of the time these never came. Instead, the majority of contact with the tribes was friendly, with Native Americans offering assistance and trade.

The right clothes and equipment were vital. Warm clothing for cold weather, several pairs of boots as two or even three pairs would wear out on the trail, guns for hunting and protection, tents and bedding, candles and lanterns, books, paper and pens for keeping diaries and records of the journey, spare leather and tools for running repairs of saddles, bridles and boots, soap for washing and so on. Tobacco was a popular item for smoking and for trading with friendly natives and other travellers. Basic cooking equipment was also essential. As the amount of necessary supplies increased, so did the number of wagons and mules needed to haul them.

Travellers often discarded equipment if it couldn't be repaired or they lacked the means to transport it. If a wagon was irreparably damaged essential supplies were taken off and redistributed among other wagons and pack animals. If there was no space left then supplies were simply dumped by the trailside. Many travellers foraged among the abandoned wagons and



The trail begins
The Oregon Trail took three decades to complete and was essentially lots of small trails mapped and discovered by different trappers, which were then linked up to create a route through much of the frontier. Independence, Missouri became a 'jumping-on' point for the trail due to a high influx of Mormons that used it.

The Rocks
Courthouse and Jail Rocks were some of the first major landmarks travellers on the Oregon Trail would see as they journeyed across the West. The two large rock formations are found near the Platte River, but both have eroded heavily since the days of the Old West.

supplies of their predecessors, carrying off whatever they found useful. 'Waste not, want not' and 'finder's keeper's' became rules of the long road west.

One factor helped or hindered travellers more than any other – money. Stores, wagons, animals, weapons, supplies and guides all had to be paid for unless they could be bartered. As demand increased, so did prices. Groups of travellers often pooled their money to pay for everything, keeping the rest in a strongbox for security. It didn't always work. Native raiding parties might make off with a wagon train's entire stake. Outlaws might also attempt to rob a wagon train, law enforcement being limited in most places and practically nonexistent in others.

Like the Pony Express, the decline of the Oregon Trail was marked by the encroaching Transcontinental Railroad. Riding the trail was arduous, dangerous and costly. Travelling from the East Coast to the West by rail was cheaper, safer, faster and less uncomfortable. A journey taking eight months via the Oregon Trail could take eight days via train, usually without catching cholera, being robbed by outlaws or scalped by natives.

With the railroad converging on Promontory Summit, Utah from both east and west, the days of the Oregon Trail were increasingly numbered. As the railroad advanced towns and cities grew along its route, allowing travellers to stop and continue their journeys in relative safety if they chose to, further lessening the need for the old trails.

By the 1870s the Oregon Trail had had its day. Railroads and stagecoaches had replaced wagons and pack mules. Of approximately 400,000 people who travelled along it, as many as 21,000 died. But, obsolete though it was, it was the Oregon Trail that had opened the route west.

Women of the frontier

Women and men seem to have had very different attitudes to and experience of expanding the western frontier. While men often viewed the journey as an adventure and were keener to risk it if they thought the rewards worth the risks, women were less keen. They often saw it as threatening a stable, ordered, more comfortable way of life.

Many women kept diaries and journals describing the hardships of the trail and their sadness at losing so many along the way. They also often found their life on the trail far more demanding, physically and mentally, than they had expected.

That said, it did give women the chance to break traditional stereotypes. In an environment where everybody had to contribute something, women often found themselves in roles they hadn't previously experienced, something resembling equality. The social scene out west was also different. In the California goldfields, for instance, women could run their own businesses and often did.

The pioneer experience often changed men's view of women and women's view of themselves. It wasn't actual equality, far from it, but it was certainly a path not only to the West, but toward a freer, less restrictive existence.

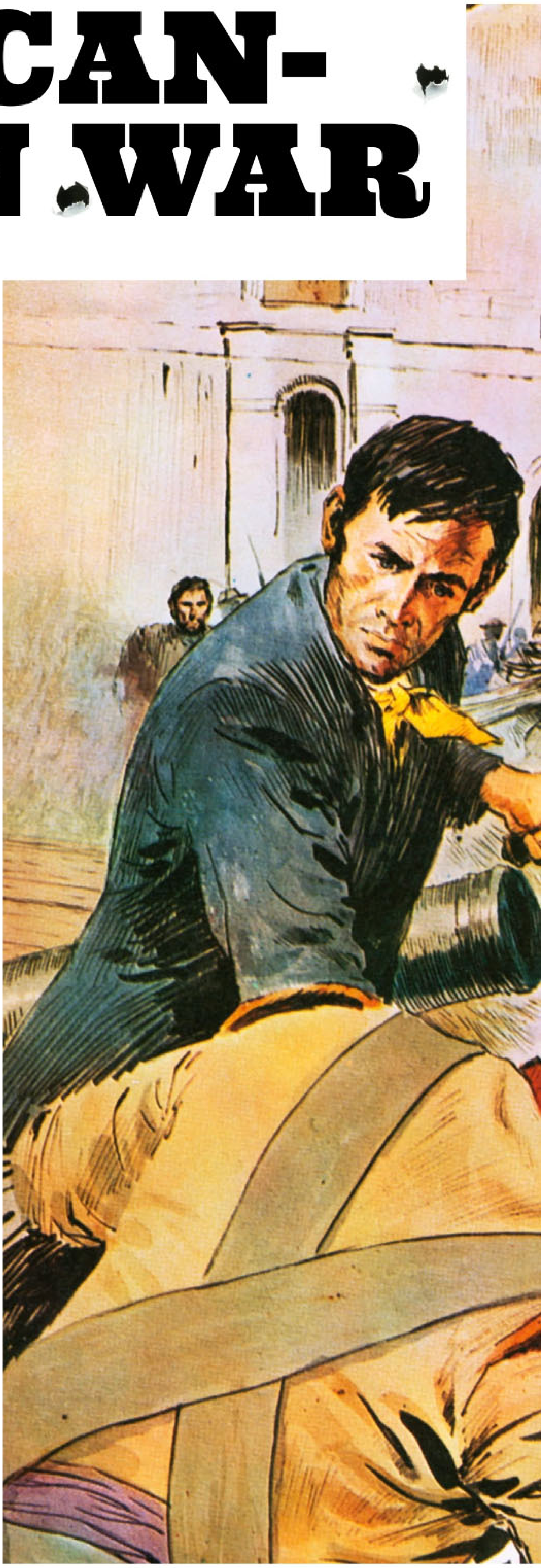
OREGON TRAIL
MARKED BY THE
STATE OF WYOMING
1914

Independence Rock, Wyoming was an important point on the trail west

©Alamy, Wiki; C24winagain, Wehwalt, Ian Poellet

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

America's manifest destiny is something that is taught in schools across the globe, but it wasn't something that happened easily

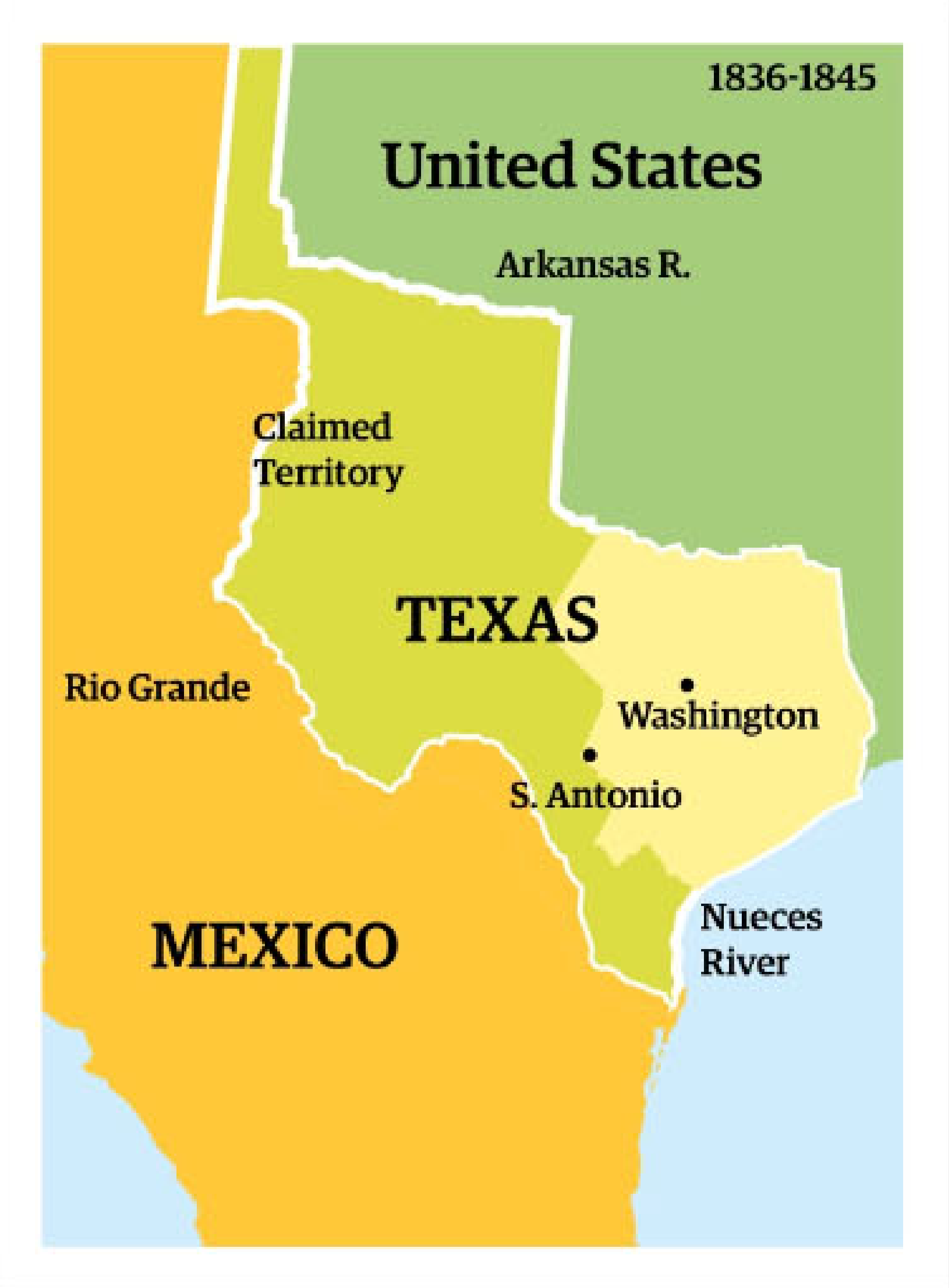


Manifest destiny - the phrase and its sentiment would soon grow strong in the fledgling United States of America after shrugging off its colonial shackles. However, it wasn't enough for this newborn country to thrive on its hard-fought freedoms while still clutching to the east coast of the continent - its booming populations and pioneer spirit demanded more.

By the time James K Polk was sworn in as the 11th president, all eyes were already fixed on the west and the riches it could yield. "Our Union is a confederation of independent States, whose policy is peace with each other and all the world," he declared in his address. "To enlarge its limits is to extend the dominions of peace over additional territories and increasing millions. The world has nothing to fear from military ambition in our Government." However, just one year later in 1846, the US would be at war and American blood would be shed on foreign soil for the first time.

Texas sparks a revolution

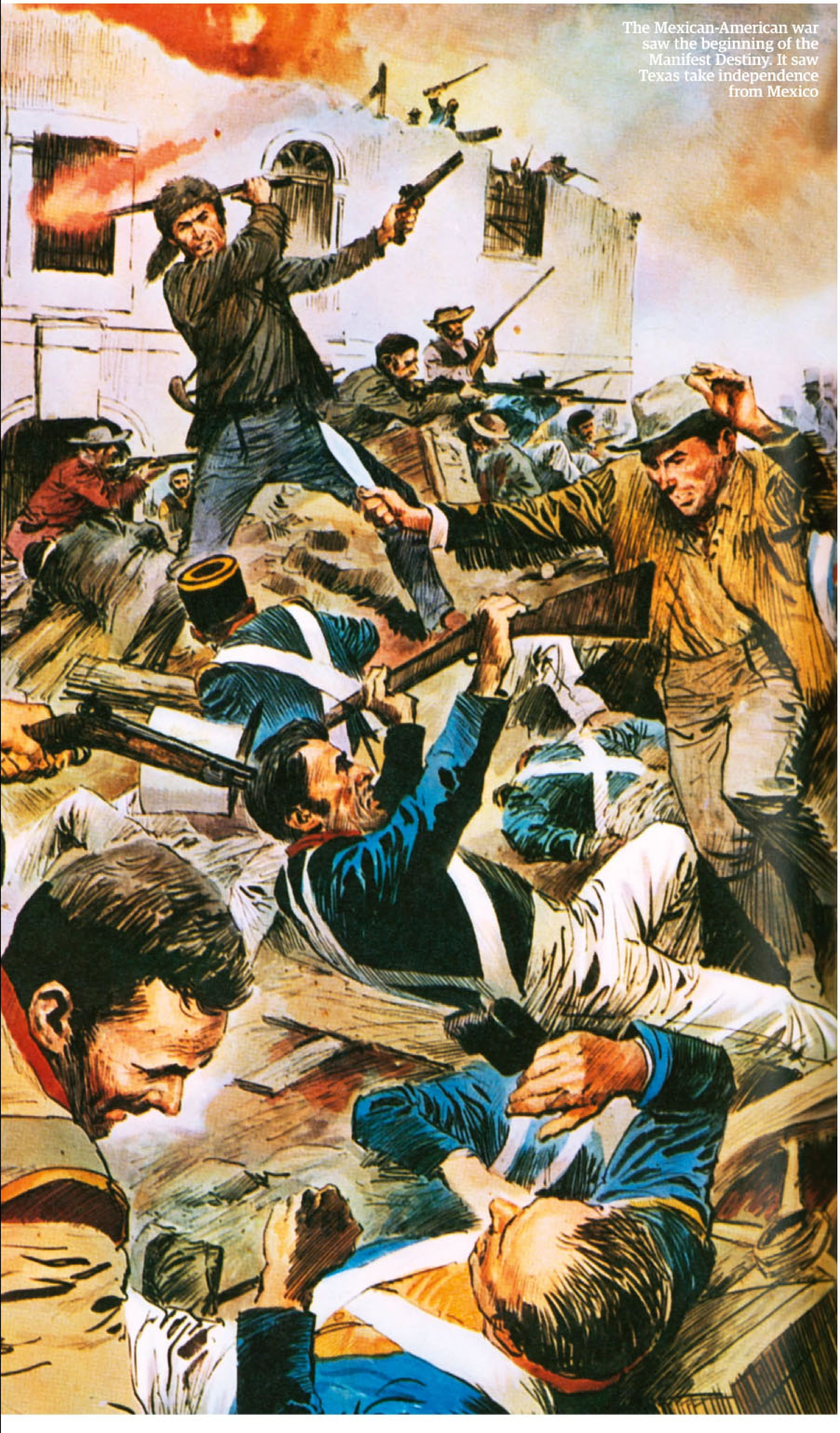
After fighting hard to break from the grip of their respective European parents, the US and Mexico was each seeking to define itself on the North American continent. However, the former Spanish dependency immediately struggled to control the vast swathes of land it had inherited in 1821, stretching from the state of Coahuila y Tejas in the north-east, to California in the north-west and all the way down to the Yucatan in the south. The population of Texas (a part of the Coahuila y Tejas state) in particular proved a problem for the Mexican government, as it was mainly populated by American immigrants fresh with the notions of freedom, democracy and equality. Though there was willingness to join the newly created nation of Mexico, as more and more Mexican immigrants travelled the state it became increasingly clear that an American-majority could prove troublesome.



By 1835, tensions reached a crescendo. Through desperate attempts to maintain control over its outlying state, the Mexican government had stopped all legal American immigration into Texas. Worse, under the new dictatorship of Antonio López de Santa Anna, an increased centralisation of power was dashing the hopes of a free democracy in the state and the country. In the meantime Texas had grown rich, with its exports of cotton and animal skins amounting to some half a million dollars. This made it a prize worth keeping or, for the American government, one well worth acquiring.

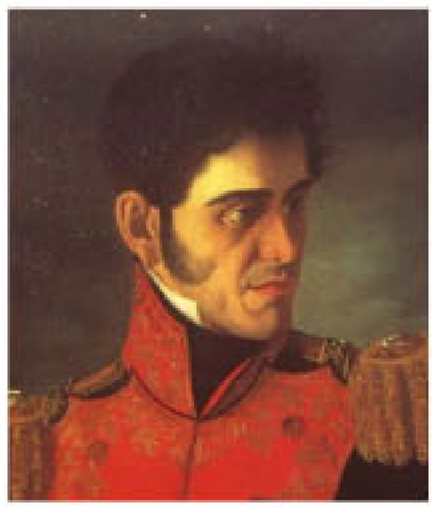
It wasn't long before tensions boiled over into outright hostilities, with the Mexican government seeking to tighten its grip on Texas. The military presence in Texas was stepped up dramatically, and when Mexican troops under Francisco de Castaneda were sent to confiscate a cannon belonging to the colonists of Gonzales, the Texians refused. The ensuing skirmish sparked the Texas Revolution, which would prove to be brief, but bloody. The Battle of the Alamo stands as its most-iconic moment, where just under 200 Texians, defending their position against nearly ten times as many Mexicans, were slaughtered ruthlessly by Santa Anna's men. The battle, more aptly described as a massacre, only served to inspire further resistance against Mexican rule and is even to this day inscribed in the folklore of the Lone Star State.

The Alamo, as well as Goliad where hundreds of Texian prisoners were executed, quickly became rallying cries for the Revolution and



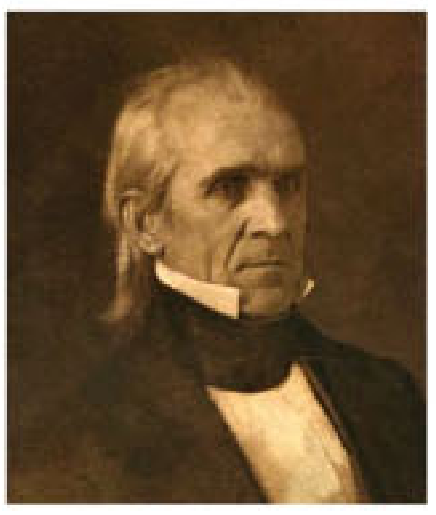
The Mexican-American war saw the beginning of the Manifest Destiny. It saw Texas take independence from Mexico

Key Figures



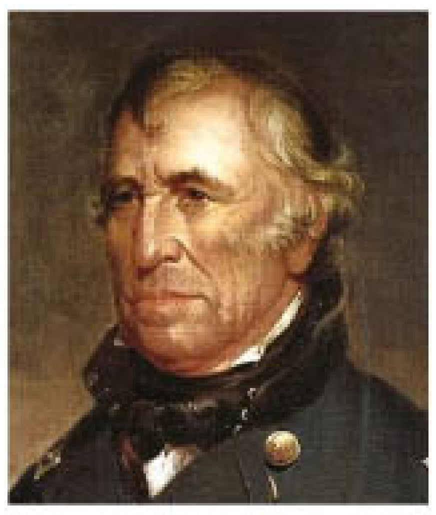
General Antonio López de Santa Anna

Dubbed the Napoleon of the West, Santa Anna's ambitions both as a general and president of Mexico are unsurpassed in the country's history. He offered to lead the Mexican forces defending the perceived invasion by the US, shortly before announcing himself president.



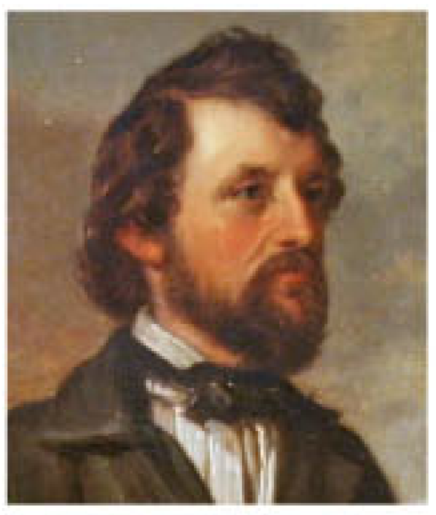
President James K Polk

After running on a ticket supporting widespread expansion of US borders, Polk was sworn in as the 11th President of the USA just as tensions with Mexico were coming to a head. He served only one term in office, before retiring from ill health soon after the end of the ensuing war.



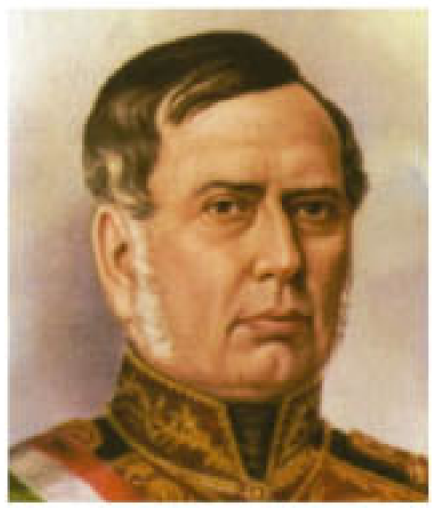
General Zachary Taylor

A seasoned veteran, Taylor had fought in the War of 1812, as well as against the Black Crow and Seminole Native American tribes. During the Mexican-American War his experience helped win many battles against the Mexican forces. He was elected the 12th President of the US after President Polk's death in 1849.



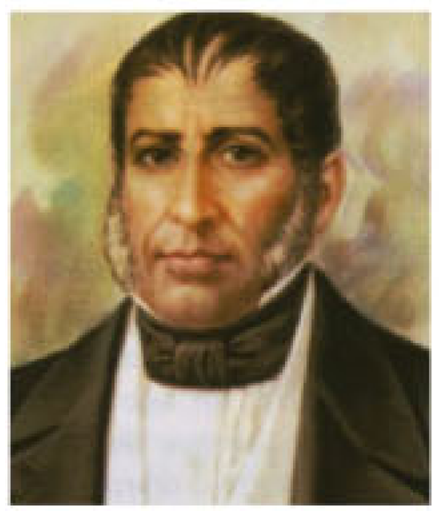
John C Frémont

Frémont was involved in numerous missions into the West, searching for potential routes towards the Pacific. While operating in California he came into conflict with Mexican populations, who saw his mission as hostile. He was actively involved in armed uprisings, such as the Bear Flag Rebellion, and became the first Senator of California in 1850.



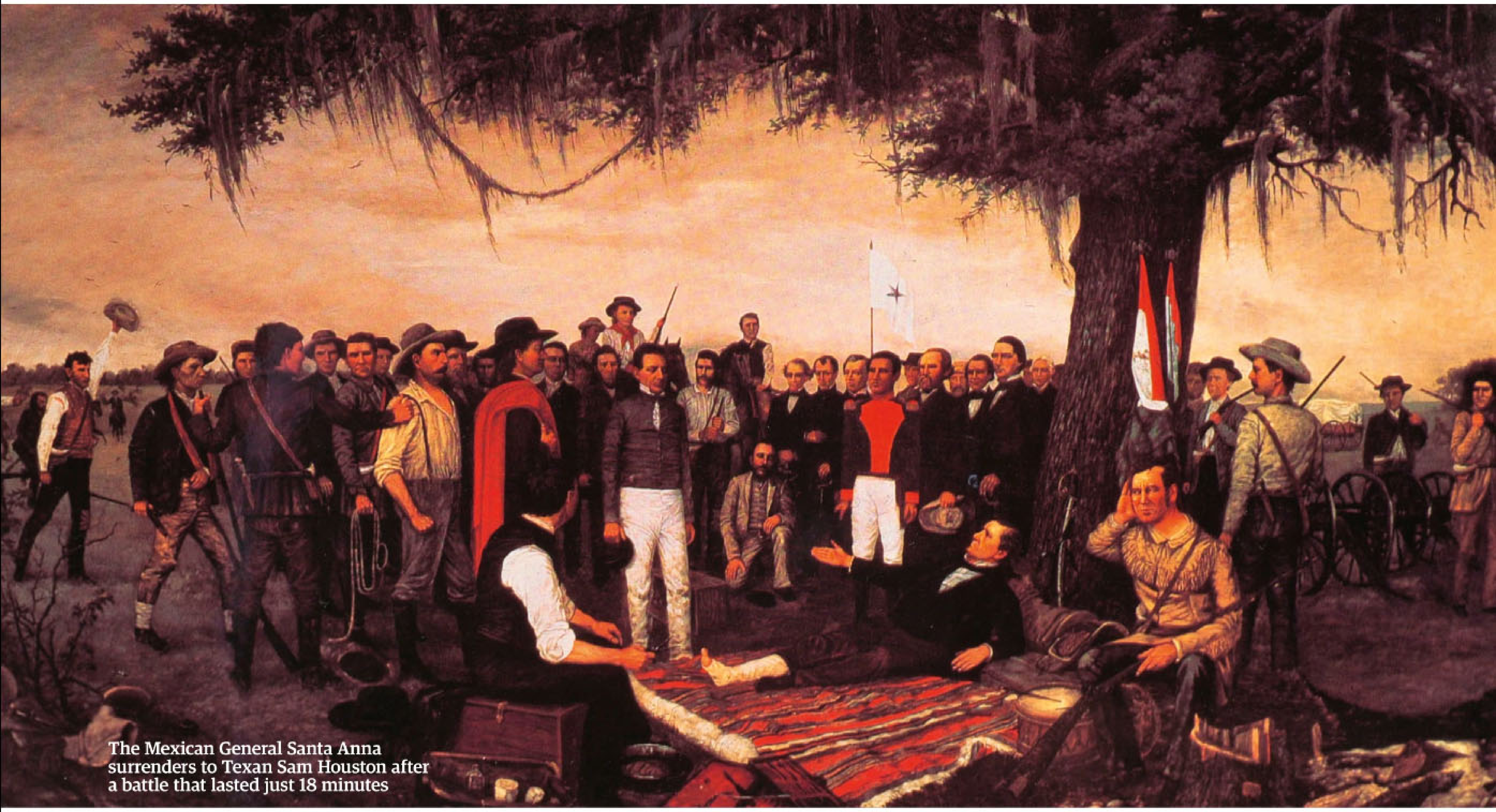
General Mariano Arista

Serving in the New Spanish army before joining the revolutionary cause during the Mexican War of Independence, Arista fought during the Texas Revolution. Soon after the Mexican-American War he succeeded de Herrera as president.



José Joaquín de Herrera

At times serving as the President of Mexico, Herrera's willingness to compromise with American officials in the sale of territory in north-west Mexico cost him his office. He subsequently served as a general during the war.



The Mexican General Santa Anna surrenders to Texan Sam Houston after a battle that lasted just 18 minutes

> "The manifest destiny, it would seem, was not something that would happen of its own accord"

united the colonists. After the embarrassing defeat by an inferior Texian force at the Battle of San Jacinto, Santa Anna was forced to surrender. It had taken just a few months for the small uprising to bring the Mexican state to its knees.

The USA moves west

Even before the election of President Polk, the US was working to strengthen its presence in California, Oregon and the disputed lands west of Texas. The manifest destiny, it would seem, was not something that would happen of its own accord. Shortly after Texas' successful revolution, talk of its annexation by the US was rife. The many American colonists in Texas were in favour of the idea, but it wasn't until 1845 that a bill was successfully passed through congress to officially form the 28th State of the USA.

All the while John C Frémont, a lieutenant in the Topographical Engineers of the US Army, had been tasked with finding a route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific, acting almost as the spearhead of further American expansionist ambitions. In January 1846, during his latest exploration of California, Frémont took with him an armed group of around 60. Like Texas, California was a contentious territory and was desired by Mexico, the US and even Great Britain for its potential riches, as well as its access to the Pacific Ocean.

Whether or not Frémont's presence was intended to galvanise the pro-independence American settlers in California or not, shortly after his arrival the Bear Flag Revolution sprang up to gain the province's own freedom from the Mexican state. This was yet another thorn in the side of the Mexican government, who now saw the American grip on the western territories gradually tightening.

In the meantime yet another of President Polk's agents, John Slidell, had been sent to Mexico City to meet with President José Joaquín de Herrera. His supposed intention was discussing peace terms over Texas, which wasn't yet recognised as a US State by Mexico. Secretly, however, Slidell had been sent with a mandate to offer over $20,000,000 in exchange for the territories of New Mexico and California. When the Mexican press heard of the deal they were outraged and Herrera was branded as a traitor to his country – there was no way a Mexican

1821

Mexico wins independence

28 September

After over 11 years of fighting the Spanish crown, revolutionary forces of former New Spain, or the Mexican Empire, declare independence from the colonial power.

1835

Texas Revolution begins

21 October

Responding to an increased centralising of power and military aggression by the Mexican government, many Texans revolt in a bid to win independence for the state.

1836

Battle of the Alamo

6 March

General Santa Anna's army of around 1,600 surrounds a small Texan garrison at the Alamo. After a short siege, the Mexican army massacres almost the entire garrison of men.

1836

Battle of San Jacinto

21 April

Taking Santa Anna's force entirely by surprise, a smaller force of Texans under Sam Houston defeats the Mexican army in a battle that lasts just 18 minutes. Texas independence is declared.

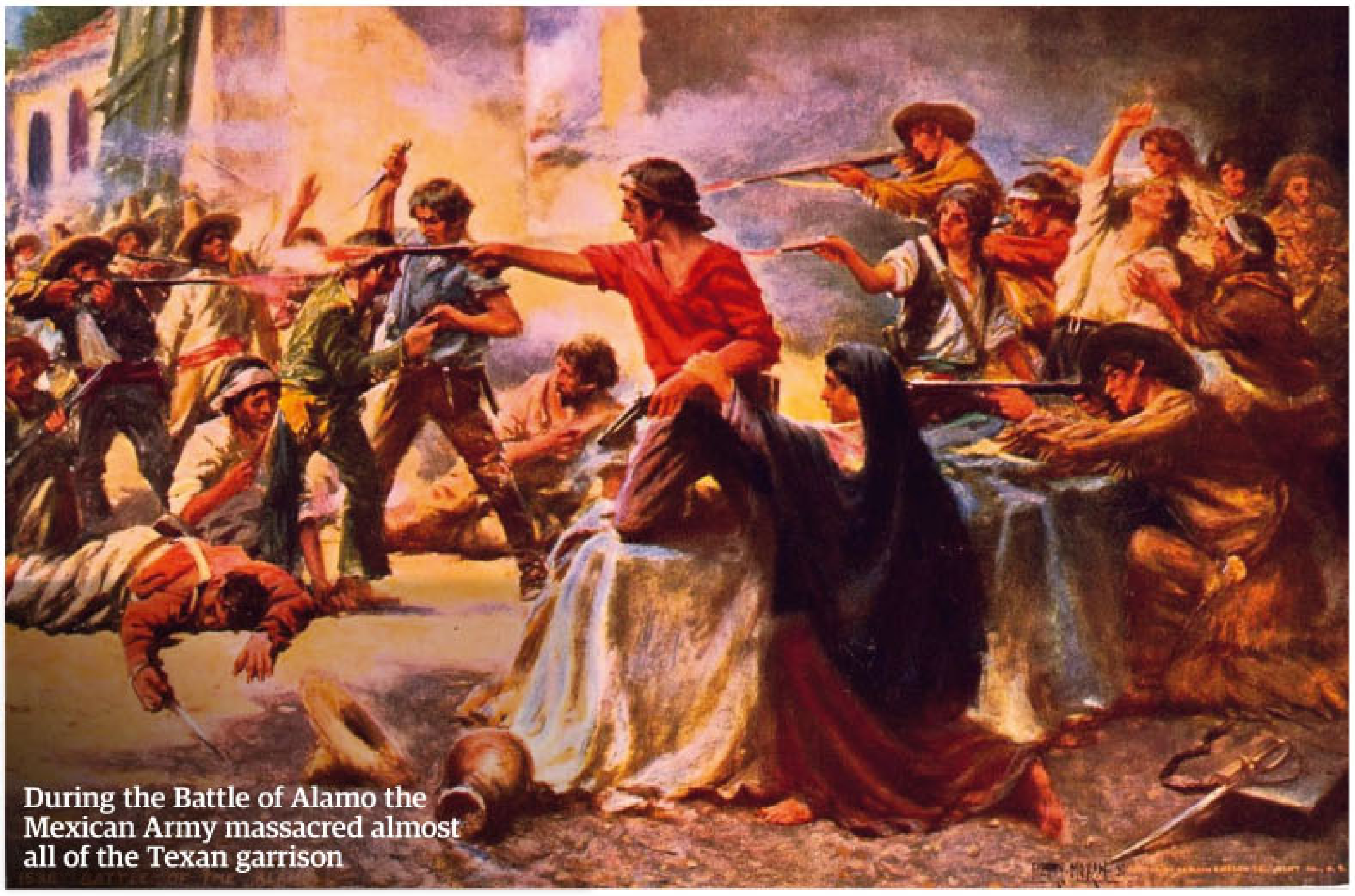
1842

Battle of Salado Creek

17 September

After re-election as President of Mexico, Santa Anna attempts to retake the former province of Texas. His army under Adrián Woll is defeated by the Texians.

president could even entertain the notion of making deals with the Americans. Slidell was forced to leave empty-handed - methods of diplomacy and even commerce had failed to settle the situation, so now it seemed a slip into war was inevitable.



During the Battle of Alamo the Mexican Army massacred almost all of the Texan garrison

The first shots are fired

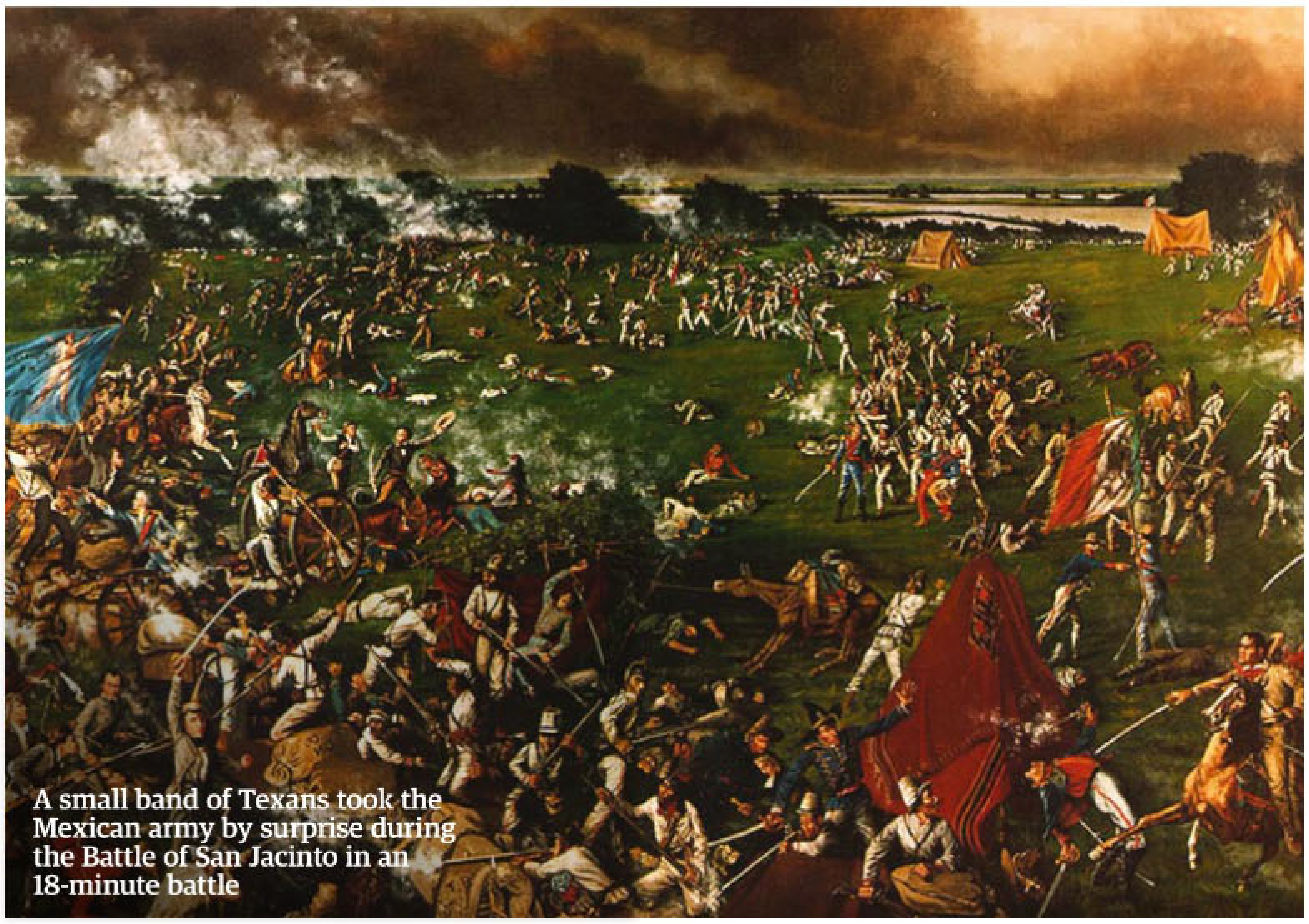
With all the pieces in place, only the slightest of confrontations was needed to set the coming war into motion. In January 1846 President Polk directed General Zachary Taylor, which he had previously positioned at Corpus Christi in the south of the state, towards the Rio Grande river. This was seen as an act of aggression and is in fact the natural border between the two countries even today.

On the evening of 24 April Captain Seth Barton Thornton, part of Taylor's contingent, set off with around 70 dragoons to patrol an area near La Rosia, nearer the Rio Grande. They cautiously scouted out the area after sunrise on the 25 April to discover if and where the Mexican force had crossed the Rio Grande. They would find out soon enough.

While investigating a plantation, Thornton and his men became trapped by a vastly superior Mexican force commanded by General Torrejon. Without setting any guards or taking any precautions to stay alert of the enemy, the Americans had been taken completely by surprise by thousands Mexican troops already encamped in the area. 16 of the dragoons were killed and the rest taken by Torrejon's force, including Captain Thornton and his officers.

News of the Thornton Affair, as it would later become known, reached Washington in May and gave President Polk his casus belli. He stood before Congress on 11 May and declared Mexico had "invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil. She has proclaimed that hostilities have commenced, and that the two nations are now at war". There was no question of whether Congress would vote for the war, which was officially declared on 13 May.

From the fires of revolution, both Mexico and the United States had finally collided and the following conflict would decide the shape of the continent for future generations. The manifest destiny, the self-fulfilling prophecy of the USA's dominance in the North American continent, was to be fought for on the battlefields of Palo Alto, Tabasco and many others. Soon enough Mexico City itself fell to the American forces and the Mexican government was bitterly forced to concede defeat.



A small band of Texans took the Mexican army by surprise during the Battle of San Jacinto in an 18-minute battle

CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC

The first official state flag of the state of California. It was first raised in the 1846 revolt

©Alamy, Look & Learn

1845

Polk elected president

4 March

After winning the presidency on a ticket promising further expansion into the west, James Polk takes office amid heightened tensions between the US, Mexico and Great Britain.

1845

U.S.A. annexes Texas

29 December

After negotiations between the Republic of Texas and the USA, the bill to incorporate Texas as a US State is passed by Congress. Texas becomes a state by the end of the year.

1845

de Herrera deposed

December

After Polk sends an agent with an offer to buy the territories of California and New Mexico for $20m, President José Joaquín de Herrera is deposed for even considering the possibility.

1846

Thornton Affair

25 April

With General Zachary Taylor encamped north of the Rio Grande river, a small contingent of dragoons under Captain Seth Thornton is attacked and captured by a superior Mexican force.

1846

War declared

13 May

After receiving news of the Thornton Affair, President Polk addresses congress and presents his case for war with Mexico. The vote passes with a large majority and war is declared.

CALIFORNIA THE STATE MADE OF GOLD

How one man's accidental discovery of gold would go on to change the face of California forever

Alta California
NIA RESTAURANT.
BOOK & JOB PRINTING
DRUGS & MEDICINES
WHOLESALE & RETAIL

The day started pretty much like any other for James W Marshall. A foreman employed by John Sutter in Coloma, California, he went about his task of building a tailrace for a lumber mill he was constructing for Sutter. But 24 January 1848 was not destined to be an ordinary day. During his morning inspection Marshall noticed a piece of shiny metal. That shiny metal would turn out to be gold and Marshall's discovery would lead to a gold rush that would last from 1848 to 1855.

You might imagine that such a find would have Sutter screaming from the rooftops with excitement, but the opposite was true. Sutter had dreams of building a vast agricultural empire, and he knew that if word got out that there was gold on his land, his dream would be ruined. So he tried to keep the discovery quiet.

His plan didn't work, however. Rumours started to circulate and when businessman Samuel Brannan made the discovery public in May 1848, there was no putting the genie back into the bottle. And the news would only travel further: the *New York Herald* reported the discovery on 19 August 1848, followed by President James Polk discussing the gold in an address to Congress on 5 December 1848. It wasn't just the residents around California who wanted part of the action – by the beginning of 1849 the news had spread worldwide, causing people to gravitate west in the hope of getting rich.

The first gold-hunters to arrive were Californians, with entire families making the journey to try to gather as much gold as possible. And, at the beginning, the job was relatively easy. Tectonic forces had pushed minerals (ie gold) to the surface of the Sierra Nevada, water carried it downstream and it finally settled in gravel beds along rivers and streams. This meant that gold could be found by panning in streams, or even just picking the flakes and nuggets out by hand.

The reward for the early prospectors was great. They were able to collect large amounts of gold pretty easily – even complete amateurs could gather enough to change their lives. It is thought that average daily gold finds were worth between 10 and 15 times the daily wage of a labourer.

Early prospectors also benefitted from the odd legal situation of California. In 1848, California was technically part of Mexico, but under American occupation (as part of the Mexican-American War). Although the war had ended in early 1848, causing California to become part of the US, nothing

San Francisco became a boomtown, with new businesses springing up to cater for the influx of people was formal. So California was in a kind of limbo – residents existed with a gumbo of Mexican, US and local rulings. The goldfields were theoretically on public land, but without any executive or judicial body to enforce this, it was essentially a free-for-all. Prospectors adapted Mexican mining law, where a prospector could claim a piece of land, but the claim only stood for as long as the land was being mined. Add the fact there were no taxes or licensing fees, and Californian gold became a very attractive proposition.

Although 1848 had certainly seen a sizeable number of people arrive looking for gold, 1849 saw the numbers explode. All of the people around the world who had heard the news finally began arriving, from pretty much everywhere you could imagine. These settlers earned the name '49ers' and they changed the face of California forever.

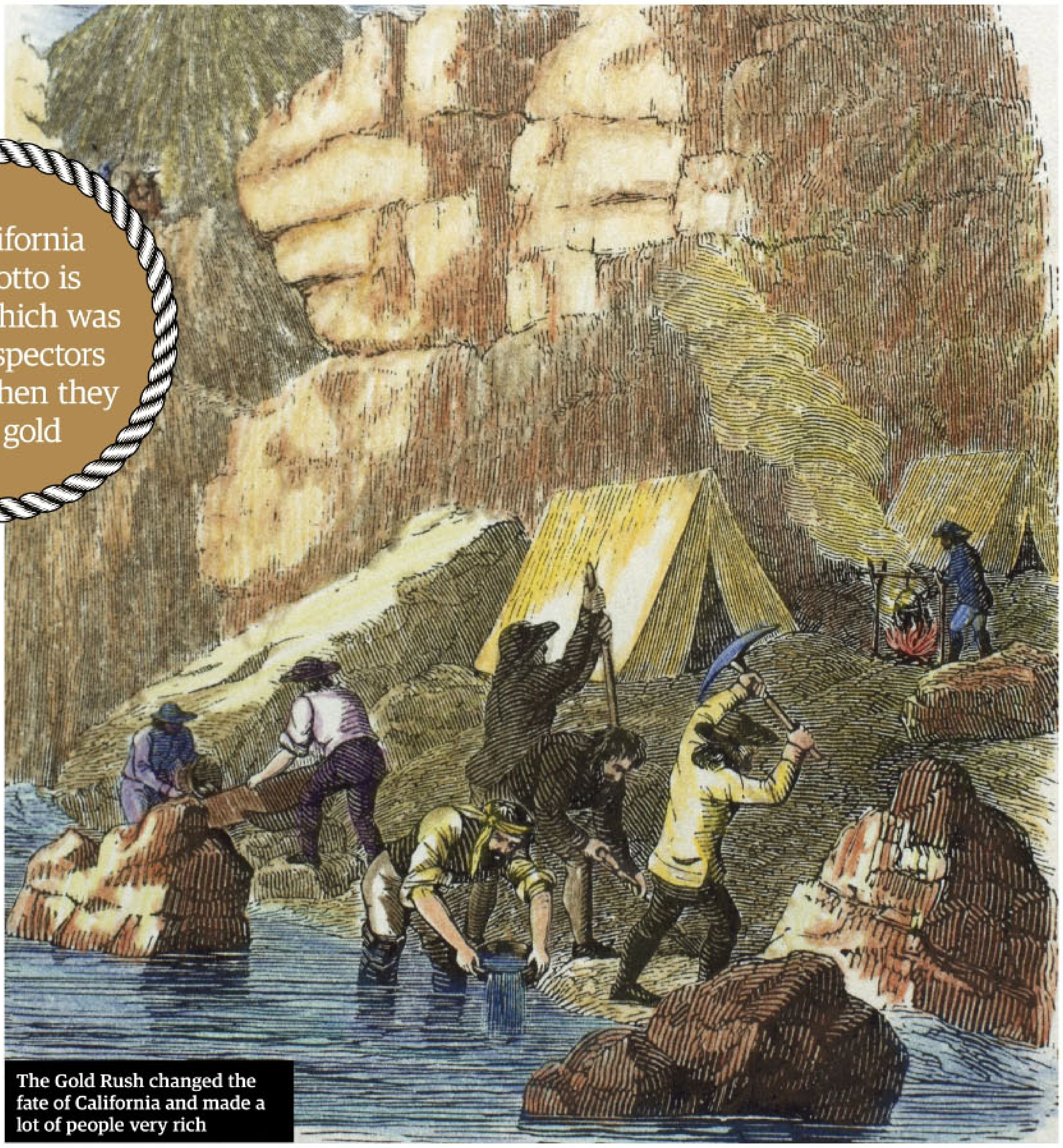
Most were American, with tens of thousands travelling by wagon train, riverboats, or any method they could arrange. But it wasn't just Americans. Eager prospectors from China, Germany, France, Italy, Britain, Australia and New Zealand arrived. Approximately 90,000 people made their way to California in 1849, around 40,000 of whom were from other countries. While the rewards were great upon arrival, for many, even the Americans, the journey came at great cost. For a start, most prospectors had to borrow money or use their life savings to get to California. The mainly male gold-hunters had to leave their family to fend for themselves, with women being left behind to raise children on their own and take on all the tasks their husbands would have been responsible for.

But the rewards were worth it – if the miners got there early enough. While the gold deposits in rivers were unbelievably plentiful, tens of thousands of hands soon depleted the easy gold. By 1850, most of the gold that amateurs could find had been taken, meaning more complex mining methods had to be adopted. This included techniques such as 'coyoteing', which involved digging six to 13-metre deep shafts along a stream, with tunnels being dug in all directions to access deep gold deposits. Alternatively, entire rivers would be diverted to access the gold at the bottom of the exposed river bed. By 1851, miners had also moved on to blasting areas to access rocks containing gold.

The hunt for gold had turned from being like taking candy from a baby to a far more nuanced and expensive procedure. It must have been soul-destroying to finally arrive in California after using all of your money to make the journey, only to find that you had to have professional mining skills to get any gold. The disappointment turned to hostility and then to blame. American gold-hunters looked around and saw people from all over the world, stealing what they saw as their gold. To try to put travellers off, the Foreign Miners Tax was introduced in 1850, which charged each foreign miner $20 a month.

Still, violent attacks erupted, most notably towards Chinese miners. While only a few hundred had made the journey in 1849 and 1850, more than 20,000 landed in San Francisco in 1852. But whatever irrational fear the white Americans had of the Chinese coming to take over their land, the truth was

The California state motto is Eureka!, which was what prospectors shouted when they found gold



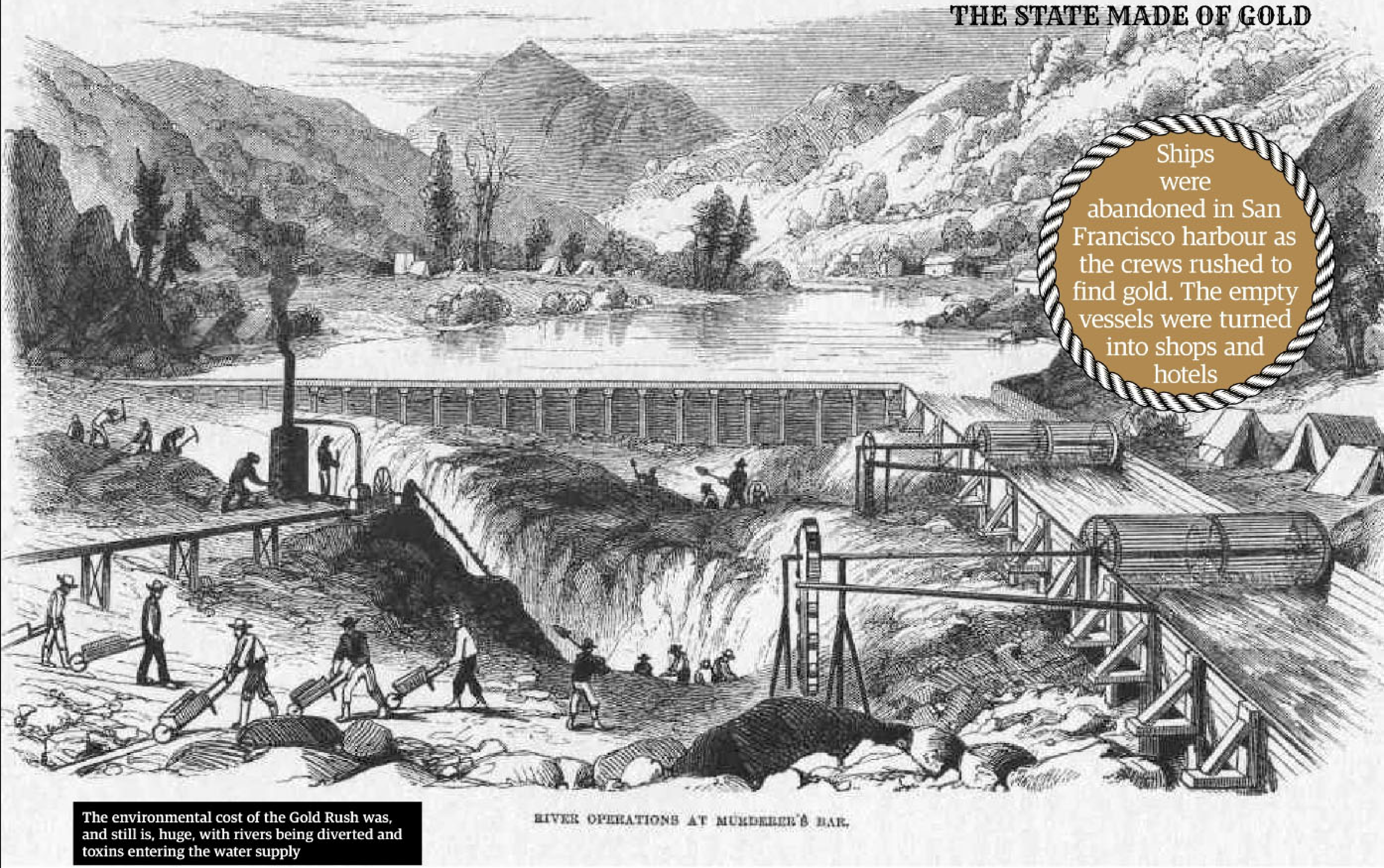
The Gold Rush changed the fate of California and made a lot of people very rich

✶ The first Gold Rush millionaire ✶

It seems right that one of the first people to publicise the Gold Rush should also be one of its greatest beneficiaries. Samuel Brannan had many strings to his bow, but the most important in terms of the Gold Rush was businessman and journalist. He founded the *California Star* newspaper in San Francisco, and was one of the first to spread the word about the discovery of gold. It wasn't just because of the love of a good story, in fact he couldn't print the story because all of his newspaper staff had left to mine gold. But as owner of the only store between San Francisco and the goldfields, he bought all the gold mining supplies he could find, and then ran around San Francisco shouting, "Gold! Gold on the American River!" to drum up business. Reports have said that after paying 20 cents for each pan, he sold them for $15 each, making $36,000 in just nine weeks.

Brannan's good fortune didn't last, however. When his wife divorced him, he had to liquidate most of his real estate to pay her half of their assets. He died a poor man in 1889.

Brannan used some savvy business decisions to make his fortune


RIVER OPERATIONS AT MURDERER'S BAR.

The environmental cost of the Gold Rush was, and still is, huge, with rivers being diverted and toxins entering the water supply

Ships were abandoned in San Francisco harbour as the crews rushed to find gold. The empty vessels were turned into shops and hotels

most of them simply wanted to get as much gold as they could, before returning home.

Some individuals made a decent amount of money from the California Gold Rush, others made an obscene amount of money, but one of the biggest winners was California.

At the start of the Gold Rush, California hadn't yet been awarded the honour of statehood. When Marshall found that tiny piece of gold in 1848, California was a dusty ex-Mexican territory with a small population and little hope. But the immigrants and gold that emerged as a result of the Gold Rush meant that California became one of only a handful of American states to be instantly awarded statehood, in 1850. But while California benefitted greatly from the discovery of gold, it was the city of San Francisco that really reaped the rewards.

John Sutter's fears of the gold destroying his agricultural dreams were well founded. His workers left and his crops were stolen

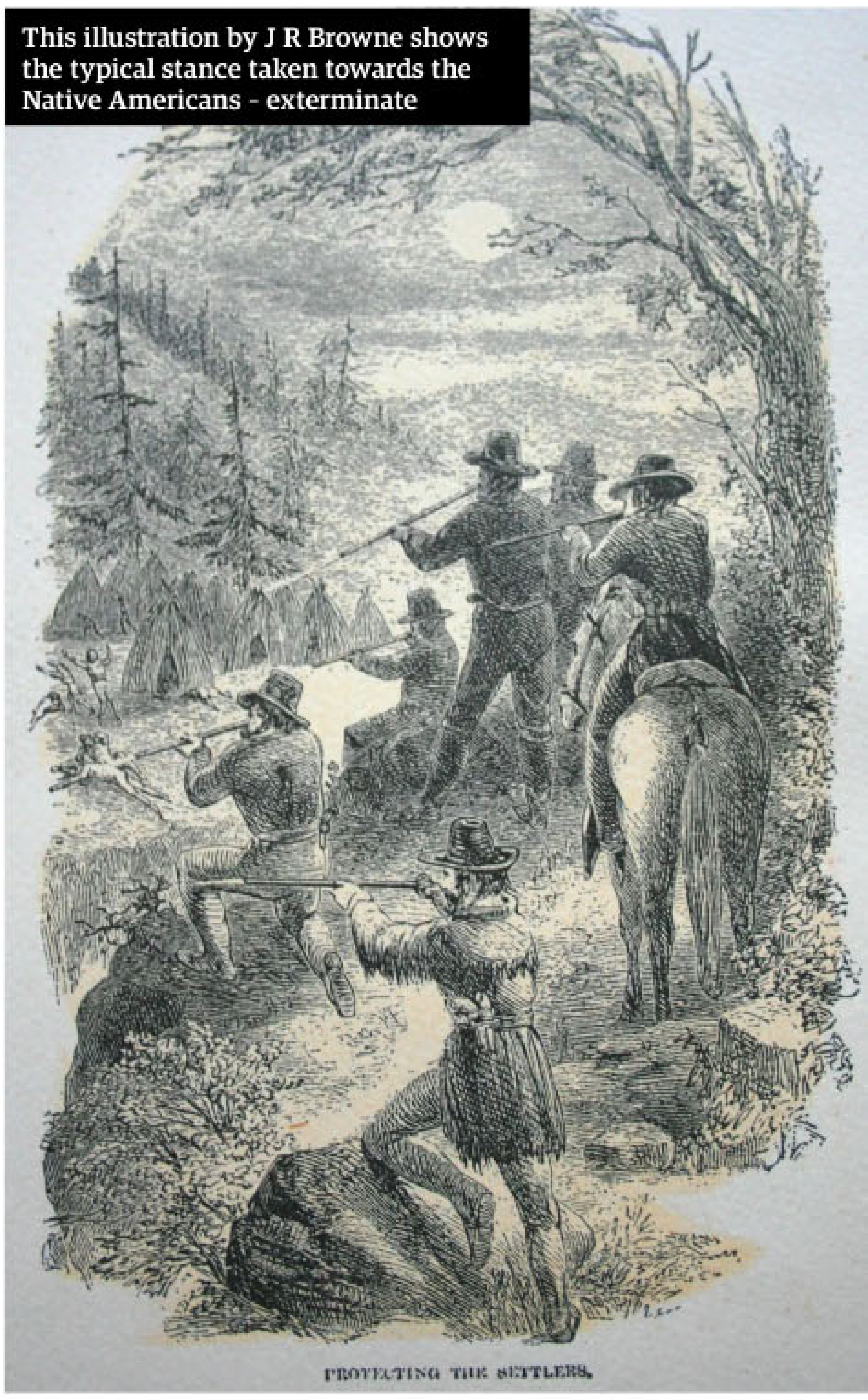
In 1848, when the gold was first discovered, San Francisco had roughly 1,000 residents. At first the discovery did nothing for the city – in fact it turned it into a ghost town because people fled to get themselves some gold. But then it became a boomtown. As people and merchants arrived, the number of residents escalated to 25,000 by the start of 1850. To meet the needs of the arrivals, new businesses sprung up, including saloons, brothels and boarding houses.

San Francisco became the metropolis of the Gold Rush era. Infrastructure was quickly taken care of, specifically focusing on improving transportation between California and the East Coast. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company started a regular route from San Francisco to Panama. Passengers would take the new Panama Railway (finished in 1855) across the Isthmus of Panama and then get on steamships destined for the East Coast.

But it wasn't just infrastructure that blossomed. Roads were built, as were churches and schools. Agriculture began on a large scale to try to meet the needs of the new settlers. In fact, for many, agriculture became the real treasure of the Gold Rush. As gold supplies slowly dwindled, those who put their time and money into agriculture profited from all the people who had travelled to and then stayed in California.

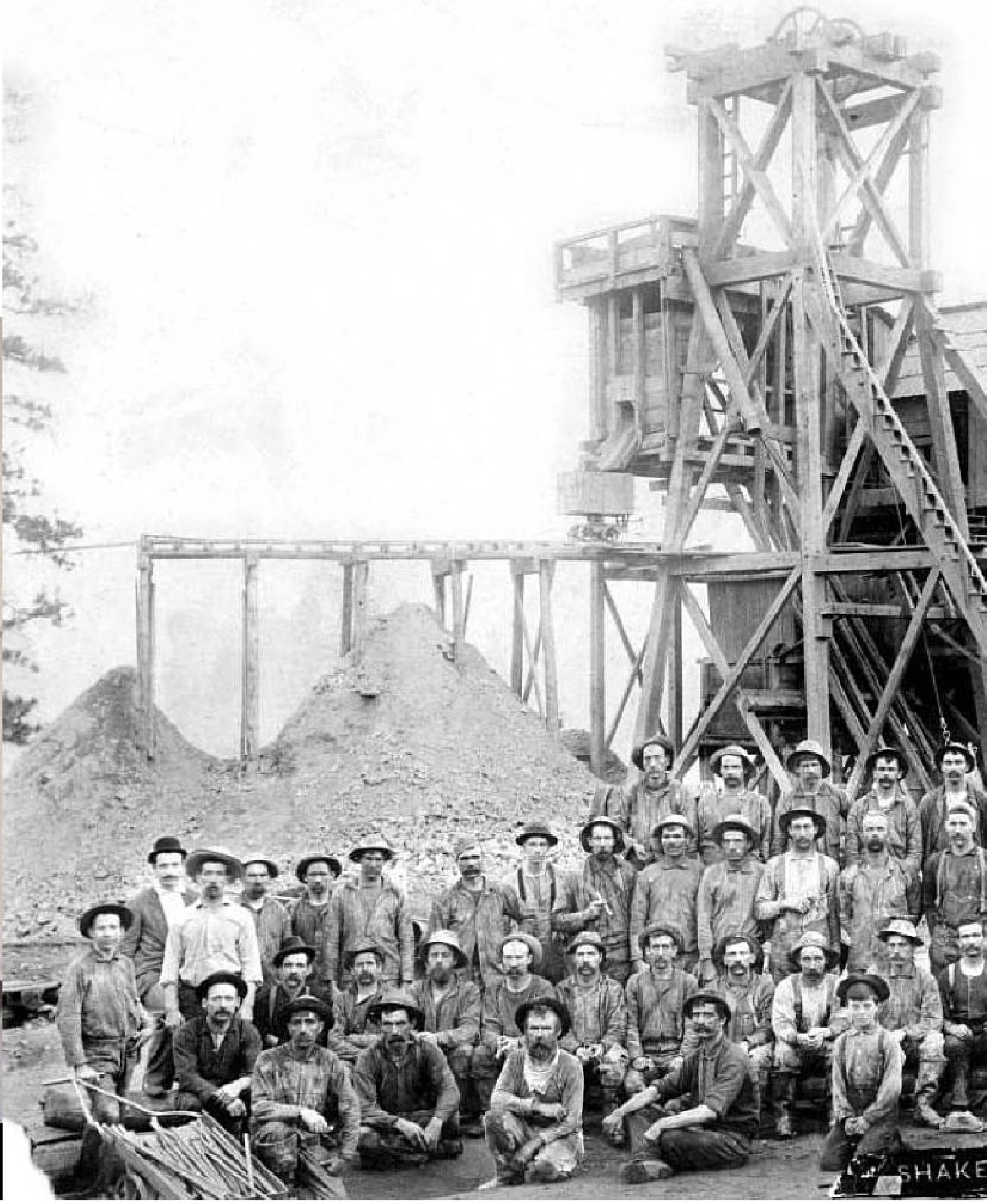
Unfortunately, the elevation of some was made on the backs of others. In the case of the Gold Rush, there were two main groups who suffered – the average miner and the Indigenous people – while the mining also took a toll on the local environment.

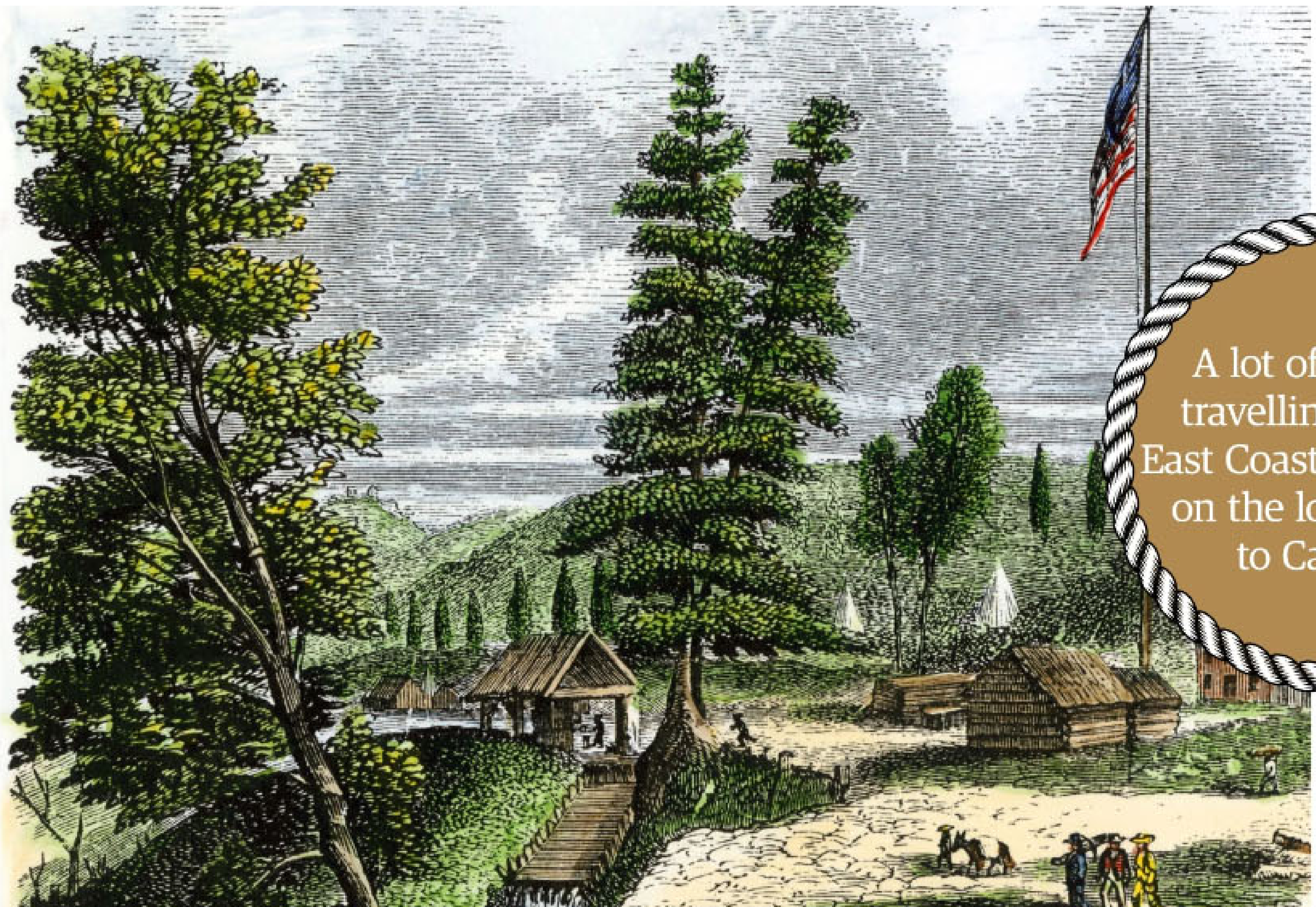
While it is true that early prospectors made a good profit from their gold-hunting efforts, from late 1851 onwards it was getting more and more difficult for the average man to make any money. Gold companies and the CEOs were the ones to benefit from what was left, simply because more and more extravagant machinery and manpower was needed to reach the gold. Most of the late arrivals made little to no money, with scores more actually making a loss. Not only did they have to compete against


PROTECTING THE SETTLERS.

This illustration by J R Browne shows the typical stance taken towards the Native Americans – exterminate

In the early days of the Gold Rush, prospectors could find decent deposits just by panning





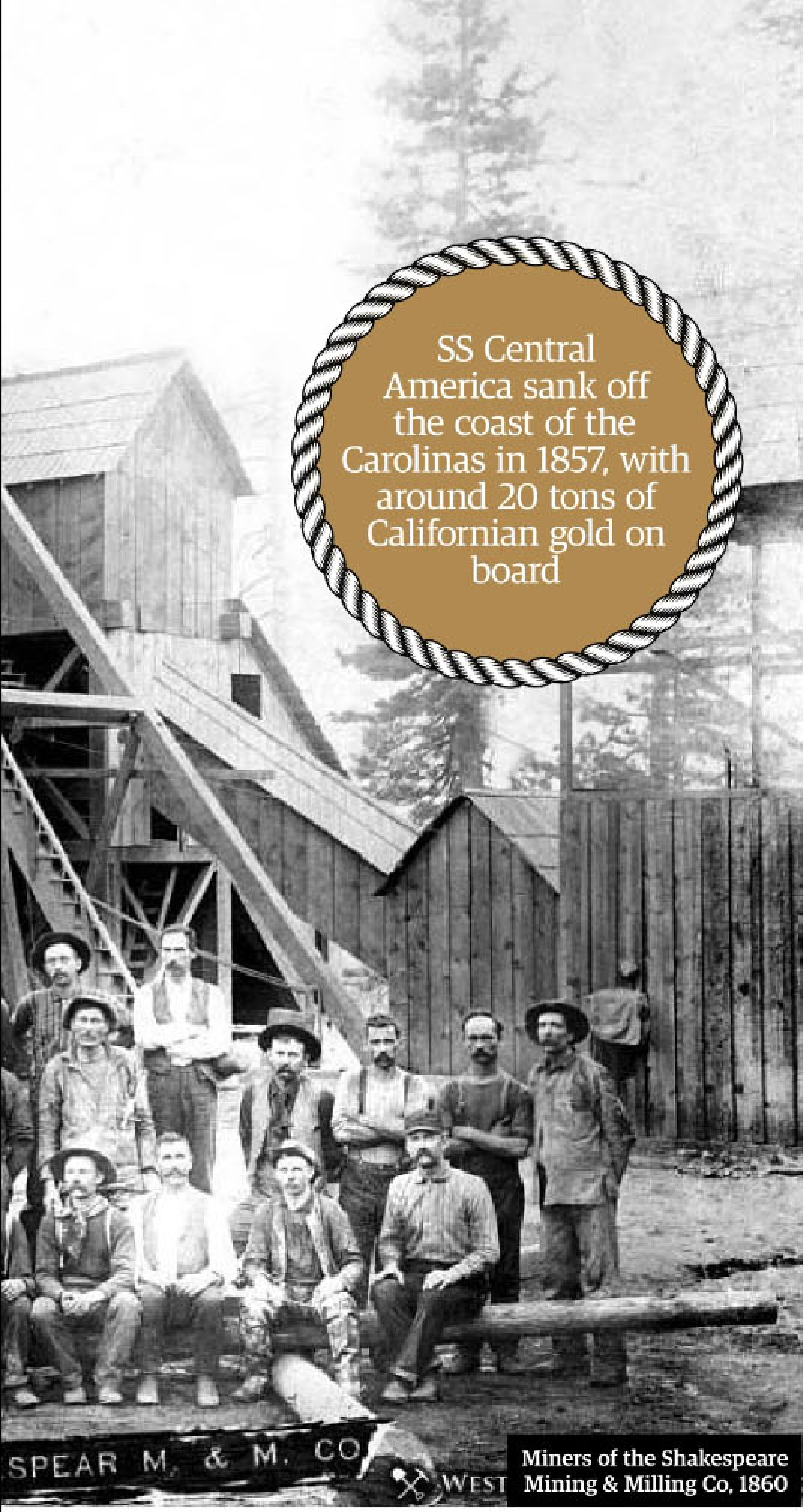
Where it all began: Marshall's discovery at Sutter's Mill forever changed the face of California

the thousands and thousands of hopefuls arriving from all over the world, merchants were raising the prices of mining equipment to extortionate rates. It is thought that a miner would need to find an ounce of gold every single day to break even. And that was for the white miners. If you happened to be foreign, the Foreign Miners Tax meant it was even harder to make money, let alone a living.

A lot of the 49ers travelling from the East Coast risked death on the long journey to California

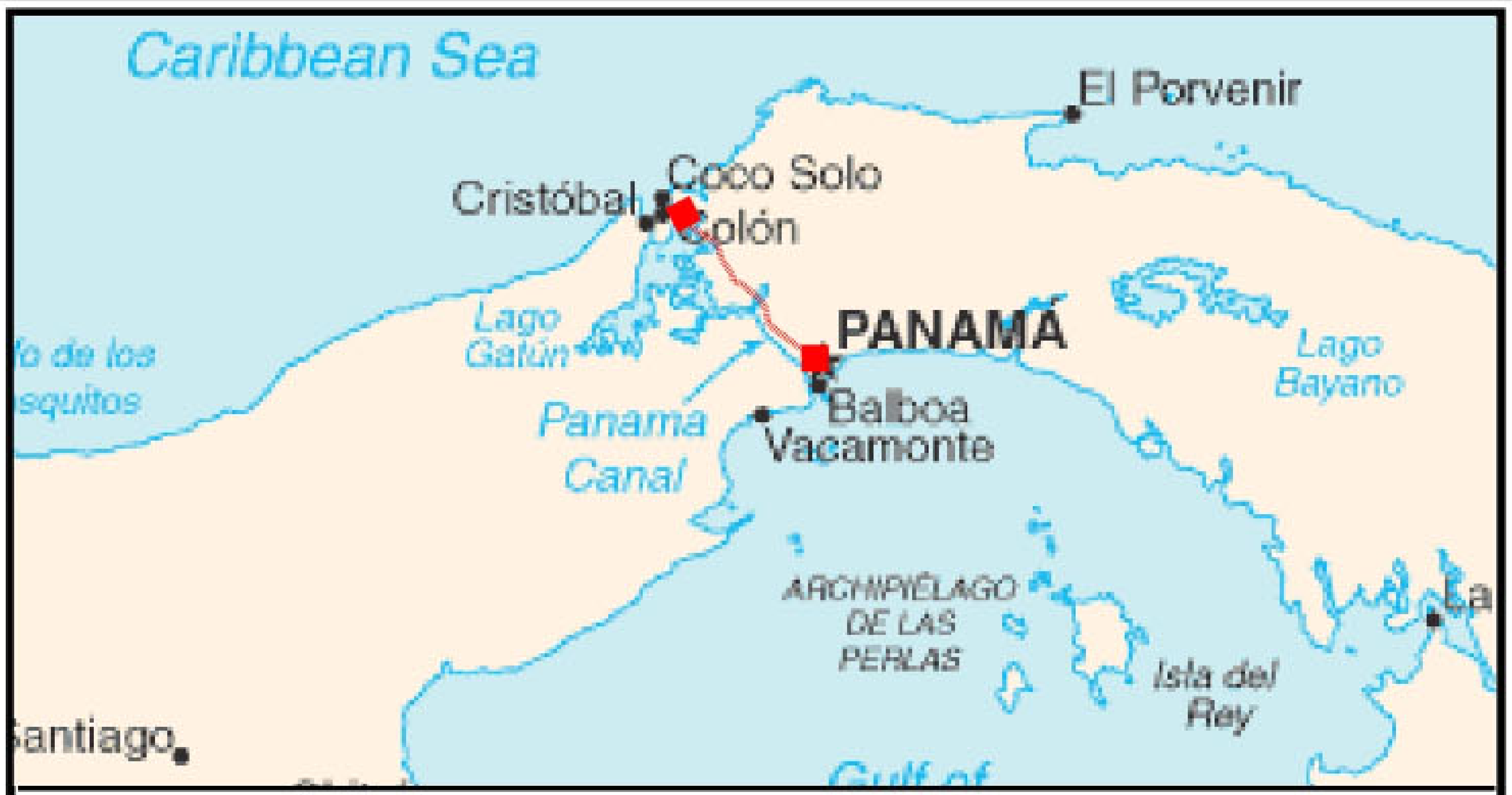
By 1855, it was practically impossible for a lone miner to find any gold. The mining methods required to reach what gold remained could only be achieved by medium to large groups of miners. As gold became harder to find, the methods of finding it became more destructive, which had a lasting impact on California's environment. Where the miners would initially use pans, as the gold became harder to find they would instead build massive dredgers for the rivers and streams. Water cannons would blast the side of hills to try to expose gold. Then there were the mines themselves, each shaft created by blasting out tons and tons of stone.

Hydraulic mining became popular in the 1850s and caused irreparable damage to the landscape. This consisted of a hose directing a high-pressure jet of water at gravel beds. The gravel, and hopefully the gold within it, would then pass over sluices,



Miners of the Shakespeare Mining & Milling Co, 1860

SS Central America sank off the coast of the Carolinas in 1857, with around 20 tons of Californian gold on board



Carving out routes

Travelling to the gold fields was a major undertaking for most people. In terms of American travel, it was the journey from the East Coast to the 'Golden State' that led to the building of some serious infrastructure. For early gold-seekers making the journey from east to west, there were only two routes to choose from. They could take the Oregon-California Trail, travelling in covered wagons. This route involved rugged terrain and some decidedly hostile territories. It took about six months.

The other option was via sea. Again, taking six months, eager prospectors would sail from New York, down to South America, and then on to San Diego or San Francisco. Sitting on a boat, watching the world go by might sound appealing, but this was no luxury cruise. Travellers endured seasickness and intense boredom as well as food infested with insects. They also had to pay a significant amount for the privilege.

Neither of these routes were suitable for the important business of finding gold, so in 1850, the Panama Railway was planned. Built by private American companies, it cut across the Isthmus of Panama and was the world's first transcontinental railroad. More importantly, it slashed months off the journey.

where the gold would settle on the bottom. The problem with this method of mining is that it caused pollutants such as gravel, silt and metals to wash into streams and rivers. It also clogged waterways in the vicinity, harming agriculture across the Central Valley. This caused tension between miners and farmers, which was resolved in 1884 with the Sawyer Decision, which called for an end to hydraulic mining. However, to this day there are still areas downstream of old hydraulic mines that aren't able to support plant life.

A lot of the mining methods also released toxic substances into the environment, specifically mercury, which was used to extract gold from quartz and stone. Environmentalists are studying the damage caused to the water, with the United States Geological Survey finding unsafe levels of mercury in fish from Nevada County.

As well as the damage caused by the actual mines, the processes put in place to keep the mines going were just as destructive. For example, water was needed in the dry months, so dams were created, changing the course of rivers. Wood was needed to work the boilers at the mines, in addition to building all the artificial canal systems. This created a logging industry, which set about tearing through California's forests. But as horrendous as all of this is, the environmental damage pales in comparison to what happened to the Native Americans.

There are some phenomenal statistics when it comes to the California Gold Rush – from the 300,000 people who arrived looking for gold, to the estimated 370 tons of gold extracted in the first five years of the Gold Rush, worth tens of billions of US dollars in today's prices. Then there are the 100,000 Native Americans who died between 1848 and 1868, in what is known as the 'California Genocide'.

Problems started pretty quickly. The vast swathes of people descending on California pushed the Native Americans out of traditional hunting areas. Fearing for their homes, they would attack miners, only to then suffer revenge attacks on their villages. The miners had guns, so any Native American in the area would inevitably be slaughtered. Surviving an attack didn't mean you were saved, though. Because the miners had taken over traditional hunting spots, any survivors were likely to starve.

Chinese miners would melt gold and use it to create ordinary household goods to try to disguise their wealth from robbers

But even if a village wasn't directly targeted by miners, the silt and chemicals entering the environment as a result of mining killed fish and other vital habitats for their existence. Land was taken by farmers to help feed the miners, making it even harder for the Native Americans to survive.

The attitude towards Native Americans was absolutely brutal. The miners didn't see them as people, but as something that threatened profit, and so would simply eliminate them. In 1850, the California Legislature passed the Act for the Government and Protection of Indians, an act that while suggesting it will protect Native Americans, actually made it legal for settlers to use them essentially as slaves, to adopt Native children and also prevent any Native American from testifying against a non-Native. California's first governor, Peter Burnett, did absolutely nothing to try to help the situation – his opinion being that what was essentially government-sanctioned genocide was all part of God's plan. He viewed the tensions between settlers and Native Americans as inevitable, leaving the Natives with two options – leave or die. The state even funded death squads, made up of vigilantes, soldiers, miners and others, to hunt and kill Native Americans.

Despite the clear damage done to the Native American population during this time, and the apparent lack of caring on the part of the state, the government of California has recorded that only 4,500 Native Americans suffered violent deaths between 1849 and 1870. Like many other major events in the Wild West, the Native Americans suffered the consequences of the white man trying to make a better life for himself.

© Alamy

LAST ORDERS at the BAR

Step through the swinging doors of the Old West's wildest watering holes

Words and pictures by Jan MacKell Collins

In the American West, saloons were a staple of any budding boomtown. Whether high in the primitive mining camps of the Rocky Mountains or on the low, dusty plains and deserts of the southwest, men were in need of a place to sip libations, socialise and escape their dreary lifestyles. As romantic as they sound, those with occupations like cowboys, farmers, ranchers and miners worked and lived in lonely, mostly uncomfortable conditions. The beds were hard, the nights cold and the time in between work shifts could be downright monotonous.

Visiting a saloon meant more than just quenching one's thirst. Here, a new fellow in town could learn about his surroundings as well as the latest news. He could ask for directions or seek the whereabouts of some place or person he was looking for. He could find a job or secure a safe (if not entirely comfortable) place to sleep. Most importantly, he could relax, sip a little whiskey, play some cards and perhaps dance with a pretty girl. A good tavern offered all of these opportunities and could even serve as a selling point for a town, enticing settlers to move there.

For the miners – a transient bunch that tended to travel wherever their luck held out – the local saloon was like a second home. In Cripple Creek, Colorado, saloon and gambling house owner Johnny Nolon was known to allow prospectors and others down on their luck to sleep on his pool tables and floor for the night. He even provided them with blankets.

Jan is an American author and speaker who writes and gives presentations about various aspects of the Wild West, including saloons and bawdy houses during the 1800s.

In spite of their hospitality, those friendly saloons could also be the scenes of fights, robberies, shoot-outs and other mayhem that came with the territory. It was certainly not unusual to see fights break out over cheating at cards, courting another man's girl or sometimes simply just the need to let off some steam. While some men actually relished a good fisticuff, good-natured tussles could turn deadly in an instant. But that was the way of the West, in an untamed land that found its footing via alcohol and games of chance.

> "Friendly saloons could also be the scenes of fights, robberies, shoot-outs and other mayhem that came with the territory"

GAMBLING AND GAMES

As well as drinking , brawling and trying to pick up women, saloon patrons would often play a variety of games. Most historians tend to think poker was the name of the game in the 1800s. In truth, faro was much more popular, for the simple reason that it was amazingly easy to play. The game originated in France as 'pharaoh', but was shortened to faro in the US. It was also known as 'bucking the tiger' due to the picture of a tiger that often appeared on the back of American playing cards.

Faro consisted of one deck and a faro board, and the cards were dealt one at a time into two piles. Simply put, the pile on the left lost and the one on the right won. The numerical order of the cards was unimportant; players placed their chips on the painted cards on the board to bet whether that particular card would appear in the winning pile. Variations of the game as it played out allowed for more betting, and the final hand, known as 'calling the turn', could pay four to one – but the odds of winning were purely chance. Because the game moved fast, faro was very easy to cheat at and is no longer used in American casinos.

Roulette was harder to cheat at. The rules weren't that different to the are today, this old French game used a wooden spinning wheel with numbers on it divided by small metal partitions. As the wheel spun around, a little metal ball was dropped in. Players bet on which numbered slot the ball would land in. But in the West, roulette wheels in the 1880s featured a single zero, a double zero and an American eagle. If the ball landed in any of these slots, the house automatically won and the dealer took all money on the table. Later, these elements were declared unfair and removed from the game.

Craps was an adaptation of the early English game of Hazard and was based on what numbers might be rolled with a pair of dice. Although it could be played on a sidewalk, crap tables with a 'layout' were present in the fancier saloons. Essentially, a player threw the dice and then attempted to roll the same number again. Bets could be made by anybody – not just the player – on whether he would roll the number or 'crap out'. Varied ways of betting could make the game escalate, with hundreds or thousands of dollars on the line. You can still find craps in casinos across America.

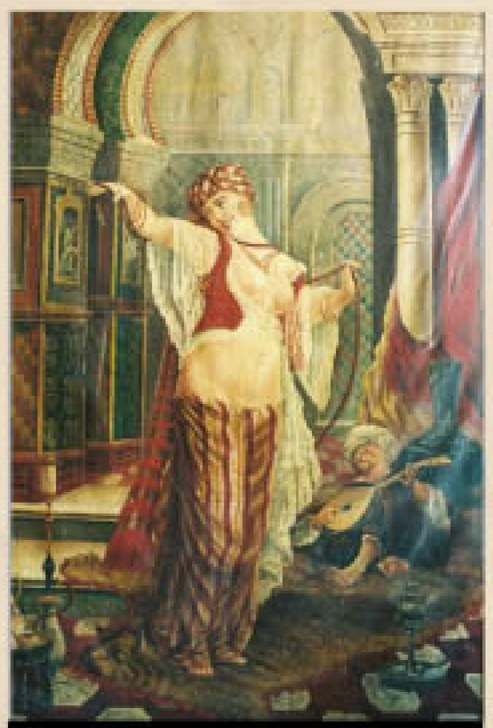
Poor patrons could still play non-betting card games or billiards. Billard tables first appeared in the nicer taverns, but soon caught on as a great way to pass the time in any bar. Although players could bet on the games, billiards limited the number of people who could participate. Faro and poker offered betting for more players and more ways to bet.

BAWDY ENTERTAINMENT

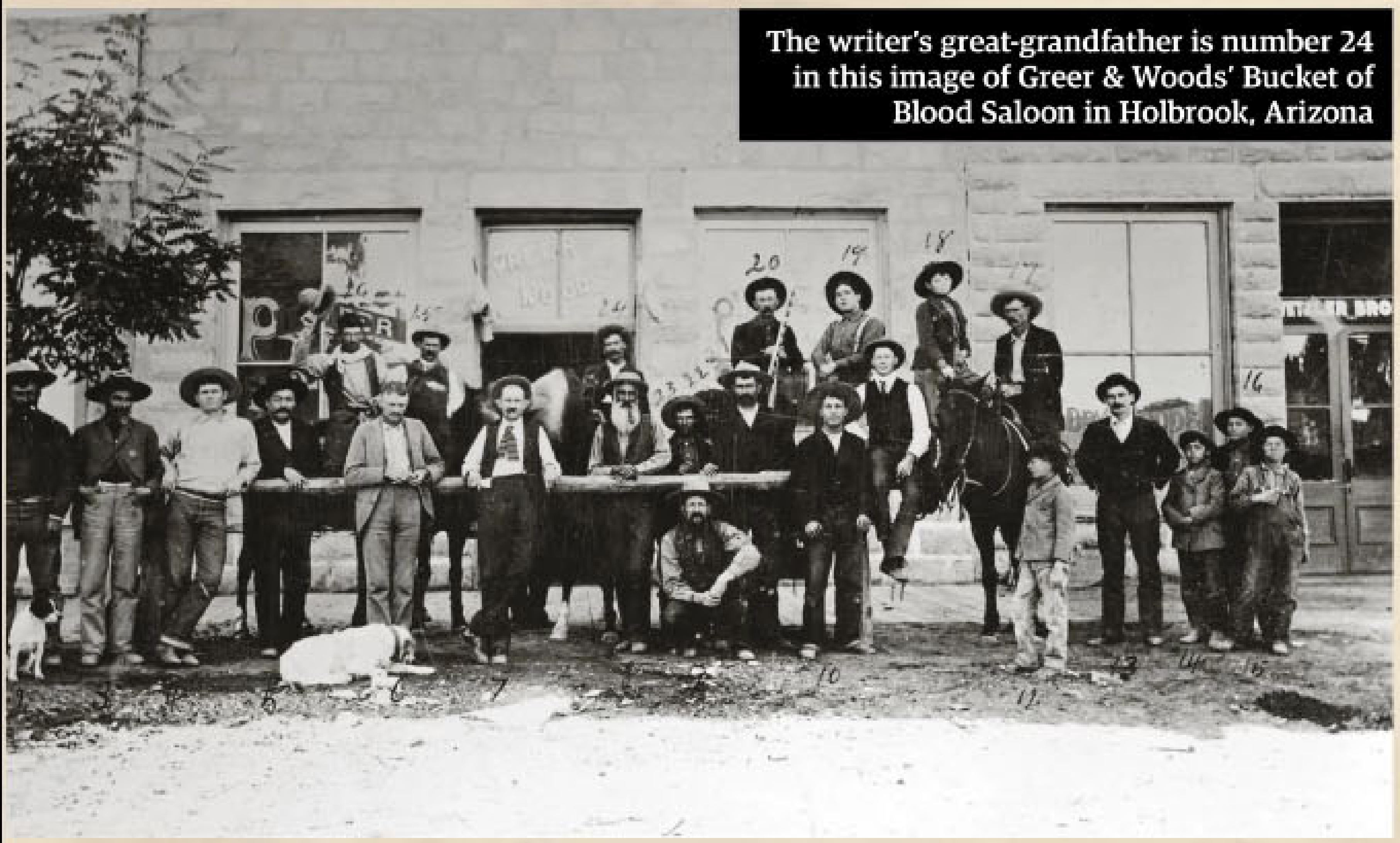
A good saloon offered some sort of entertainment. Female singers were highly popular, usually performing with accompaniment by a small orchestra. The songs could range from bawdy numbers to opera pieces. During the 1870s in Globe, Arizona, the St Elmo Saloon featured female acrobats and singers who doubled as prostitutes between their acts.

Other places, such as the Theatre Comique in Pueblo, Colorado, offered plays – although rowdy

This bordello in Cheyenne, Wyoming, featured pretty girls, a piano player and most certainly alcohol



At the Birdcage Theatre in Tombstone, Arizona, a life-size poster of 'Little Egypt' the belly dancer remains as testament to her performances there



The writer's great-grandfather is number 24 in this image of Greer & Woods' Bucket of Blood Saloon in Holbrook, Arizona

THE WEST'S WILDEST SALOONS, BARKEEPS AND FLOOSIES

BOB LEE

Member of Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch

A cousin of the notorious Kid Curry, Bob could play fiddle and deal poker. He also helped rob a train and worked as a miner when he wasn't bartending in Harlem, Montana.

BUCKET OF BLOOD SALOON

Holbrook, Arizona

This rowdy tavern, also known as the Pioneer Saloon to many, was a favourite watering hole of the famed Hashknife cowboys of Arizona, who enjoyed kicking their heels up on Saturday nights.

CHICAGO JO HENSLEY

Helena, Montana

Josephine Airey "mortgaged everything, including her underwear – three dozen pairs of underclothes" to eventually build her Red Light Saloon. She became one of the wealthiest landowners in Helena.

PEARL DEVERE

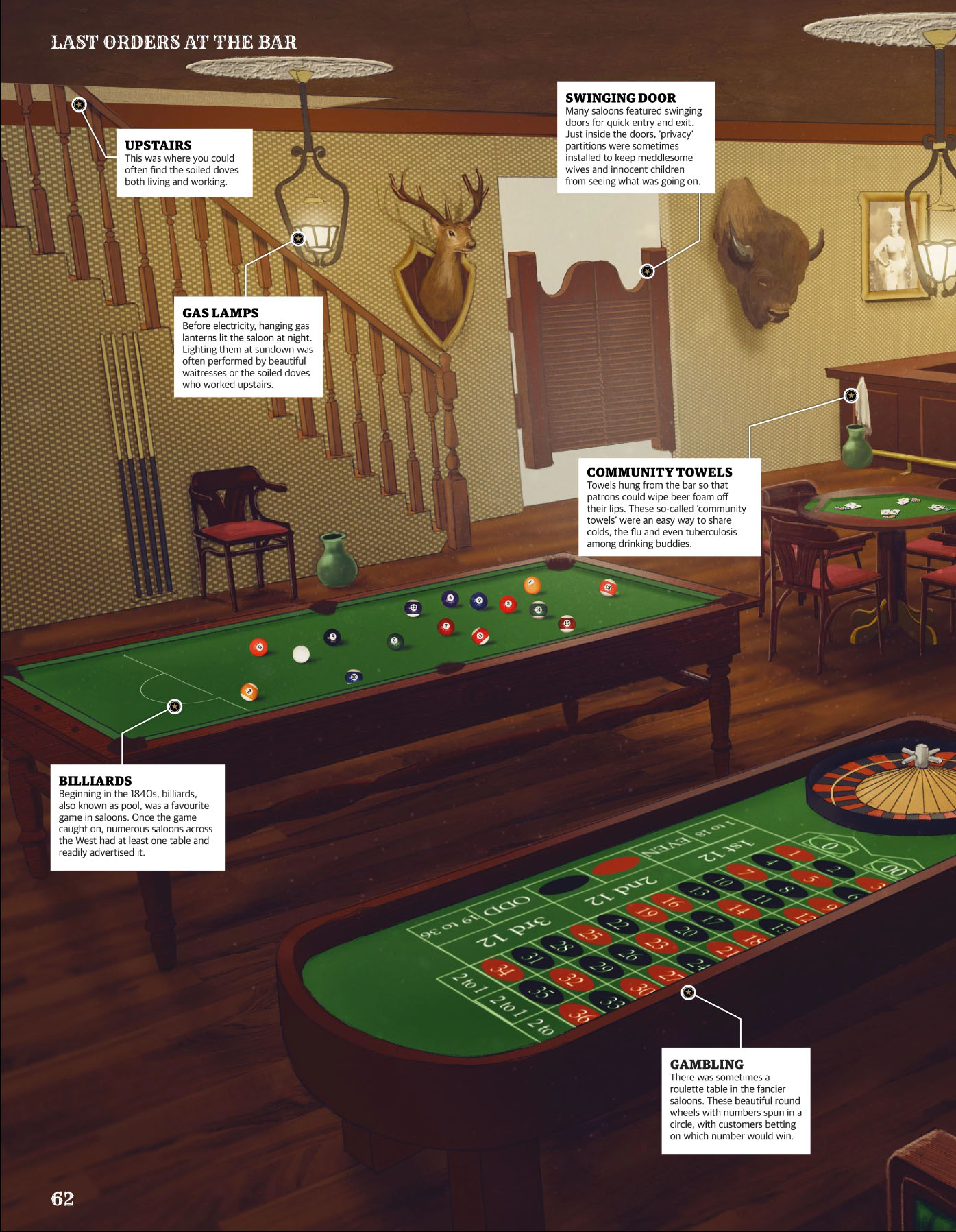
Cripple Creek, Colorado

Pearl's Old Homestead Parlour House was among the most palatial in the west. The prices ran between $50 per 'trick' or $250 for all night. Today the house is a most unique museum.

THE WHITE ELEPHANT

Fort Worth, Texas

This historic tavern opened in 1884 and quickly evolved into one of the classiest places in the southwest. The quality food and drink drew wealthy men but also scallywags. The bar remains quite popular today.



UPSTAIRS
This was where you could often find the soiled doves both living and working.

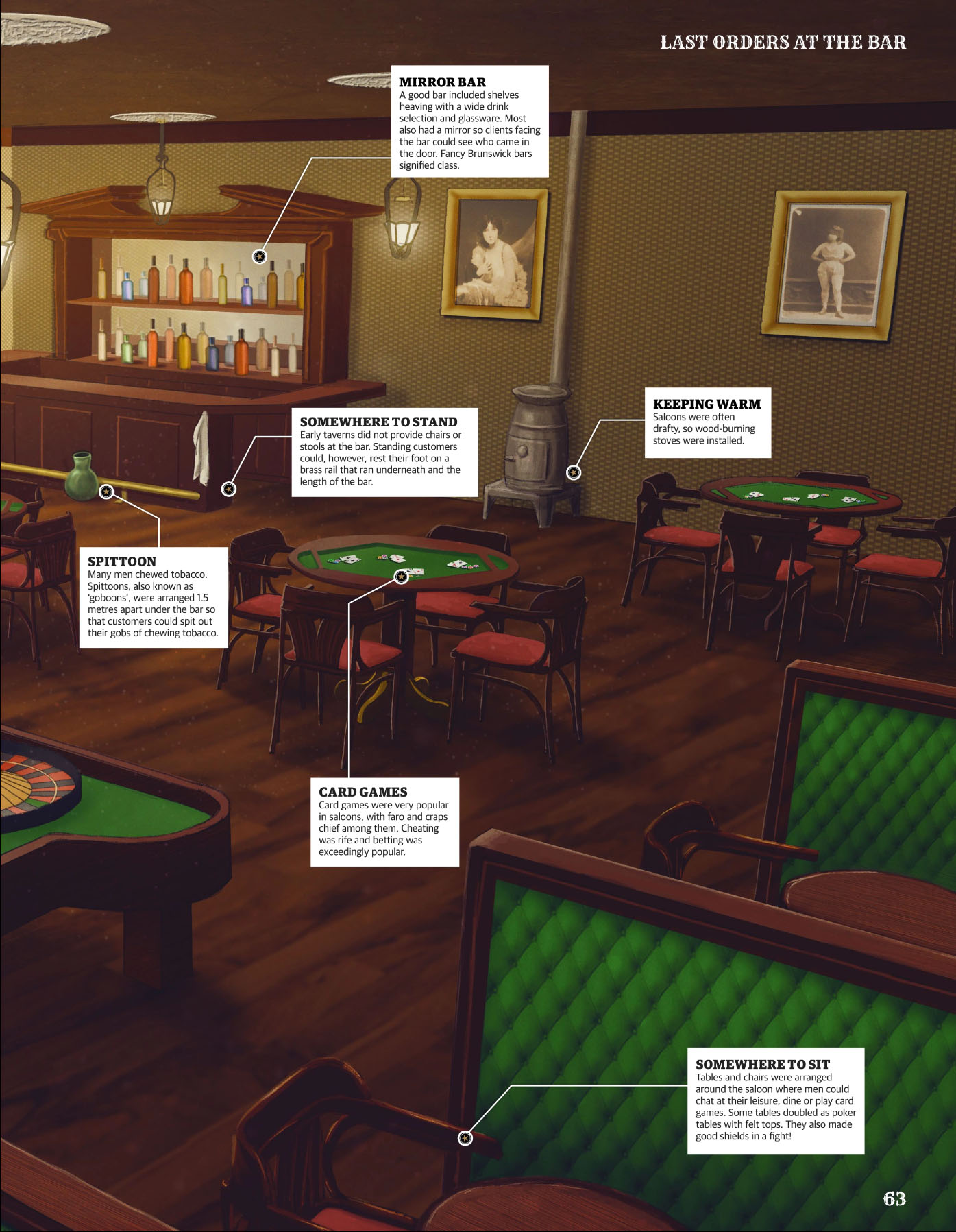
SWINGING DOOR
Many saloons featured swinging doors for quick entry and exit. Just inside the doors, 'privacy' partitions were sometimes installed to keep meddlesome wives and innocent children from seeing what was going on.

GAS LAMPS
Before electricity, hanging gas lanterns lit the saloon at night. Lighting them at sundown was often performed by beautiful waitresses or the soiled doves who worked upstairs.

COMMUNITY TOWELS
Towels hung from the bar so that patrons could wipe beer foam off their lips. These so-called 'community towels' were an easy way to share colds, the flu and even tuberculosis among drinking buddies.

BILLIARDS
Beginning in the 1840s, billiards, also known as pool, was a favourite game in saloons. Once the game caught on, numerous saloons across the West had at least one table and readily advertised it.

GAMBLING
There was sometimes a roulette table in the fancier saloons. These beautiful round wheels with numbers spun in a circle, with customers betting on which number would win.



MIRROR BAR

A good bar included shelves heaving with a wide drink selection and glassware. Most also had a mirror so clients facing the bar could see who came in the door. Fancy Brunswick bars signified class.

SOMEWHERE TO STAND

Early taverns did not provide chairs or stools at the bar. Standing customers could, however, rest their foot on a brass rail that ran underneath and the length of the bar.

KEEPING WARM

Saloons were often drafty, so wood-burning stoves were installed.

SPITTOON

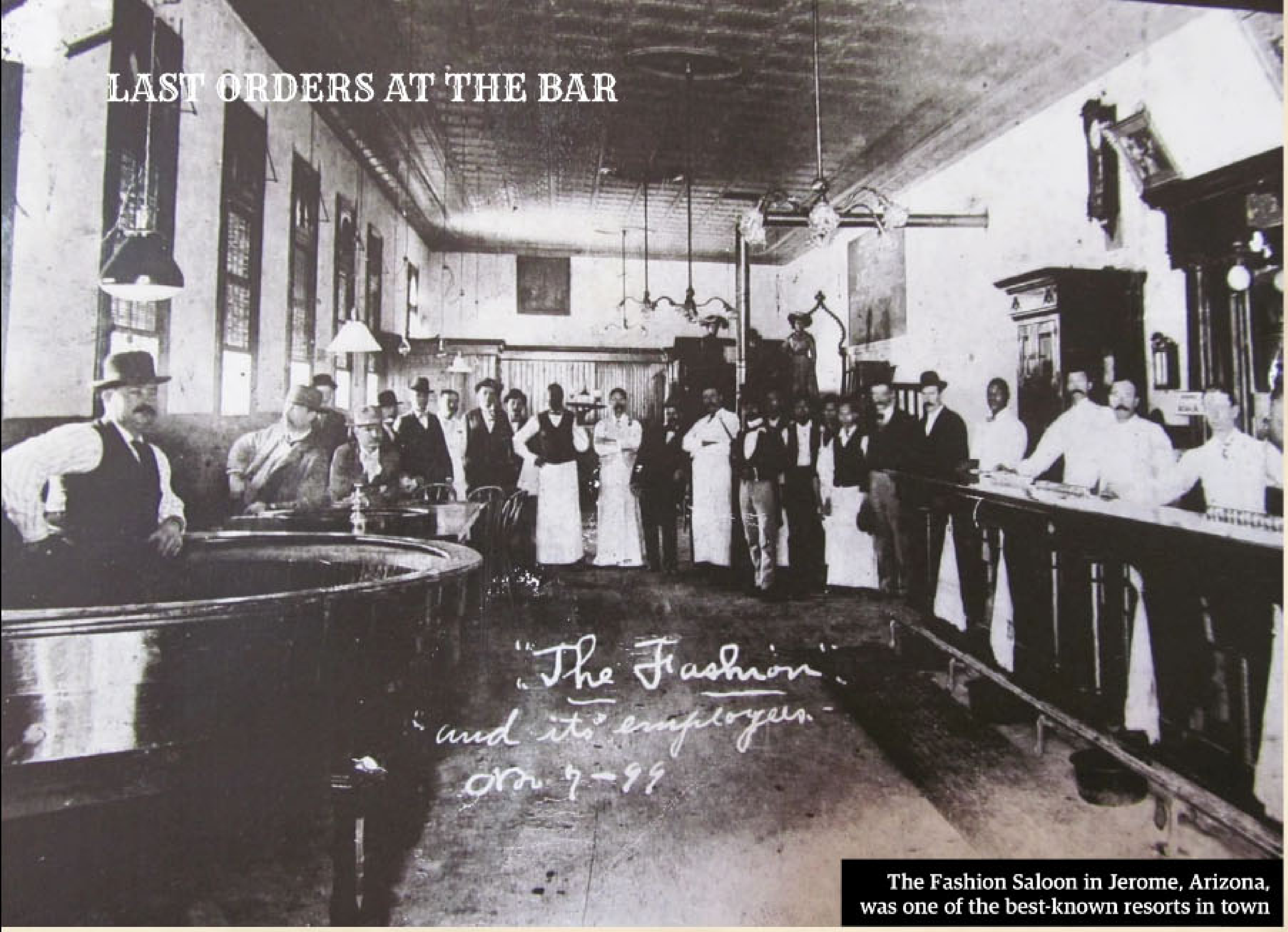
Many men chewed tobacco. Spittoons, also known as 'goboons', were arranged 1.5 metres apart under the bar so that customers could spit out their gobs of chewing tobacco.

CARD GAMES

Card games were very popular in saloons, with faro and craps chief among them. Cheating was rife and betting was exceedingly popular.

SOMEWHERE TO SIT

Tables and chairs were arranged around the saloon where men could chat at their leisure, dine or play card games. Some tables doubled as poker tables with felt tops. They also made good shields in a fight!



The Fashion Saloon in Jerome, Arizona, was one of the best-known resorts in town

"Some places even went so far as to serve a free lunch with the purchase of one or more drinks"

customers might not care to sit through the entire show. In the Theatre Comique's case in 1875, one drunken customer was beaten with a board by an actress after he insulted her. "After pounding him to her heart's content, she leaped back upon the stage, and the play went on swimmingly," reported one local newspaper.

In their efforts to squelch drinking, gambling and prostitution in their midst, certain city authorities outlawed women from performing in or entering saloons. In 1882, in Shakespeare, New Mexico, one clever saloon owner found a way around the law prohibiting women from entering his place: he simply pushed the saloon's piano right up to the window, whereby his female musician could reach through it and play a tune while standing outside on the veranda.

Similar laws prohibiting female performers were eventually challenged by the ladies themselves, and many of the ordinances were overturned. Nobody could deny Grace Bartell, who took the popular nickname 'Little Egypt', when she performed her legendary belly dance at the Birdcage Theatre in Tombstone, Arizona, in 1893! Grace went on to have quite a lengthy career; in 1910 she also performed at the famed Palace Saloon in Prescott, Arizona.

During the gay 1890s, the entertainment industry had grown to include more 'variety artists'. Because women of the stage sometimes sold sex on the side, mingling with actors in general was often something that was frowned upon by decent society. The cleaner acts, however, included performers such as Lottie and Polly Oatley. They had a small dog named Tiny, who sang along with them in a soprano voice. In 1896, the girls performed at the Regina Saloon in Dawson, Alaska, as well as in Victor, Colorado. In nearby Cripple Creek, those longing for the good old days could still view the real can-can being performed at Mahogany Hall.

Around the turn of the 20th century, boxing also became a huge draw for men looking for some action. Jack Dempsey fought one of his first bouts in Victor. Later, he also fought at the Ramona Athletic Club in the short-lived town of Ramona, Colorado. After Colorado City outlawed liquor in 1913, Ramona was founded exclusively to house saloons and gambling houses. The local newspaper, the *Colorado City Iris*, said that the "booze annex [...] opened in a blaze of glory", but it soon dried up after Prohibition was extended state-wide in 1916. The town – which had 49 permanent residents at its start – did try to struggle on, but it just couldn't draw the same crowds with only restaurants, even with periodic boxing matches.

PAINTED LADIES

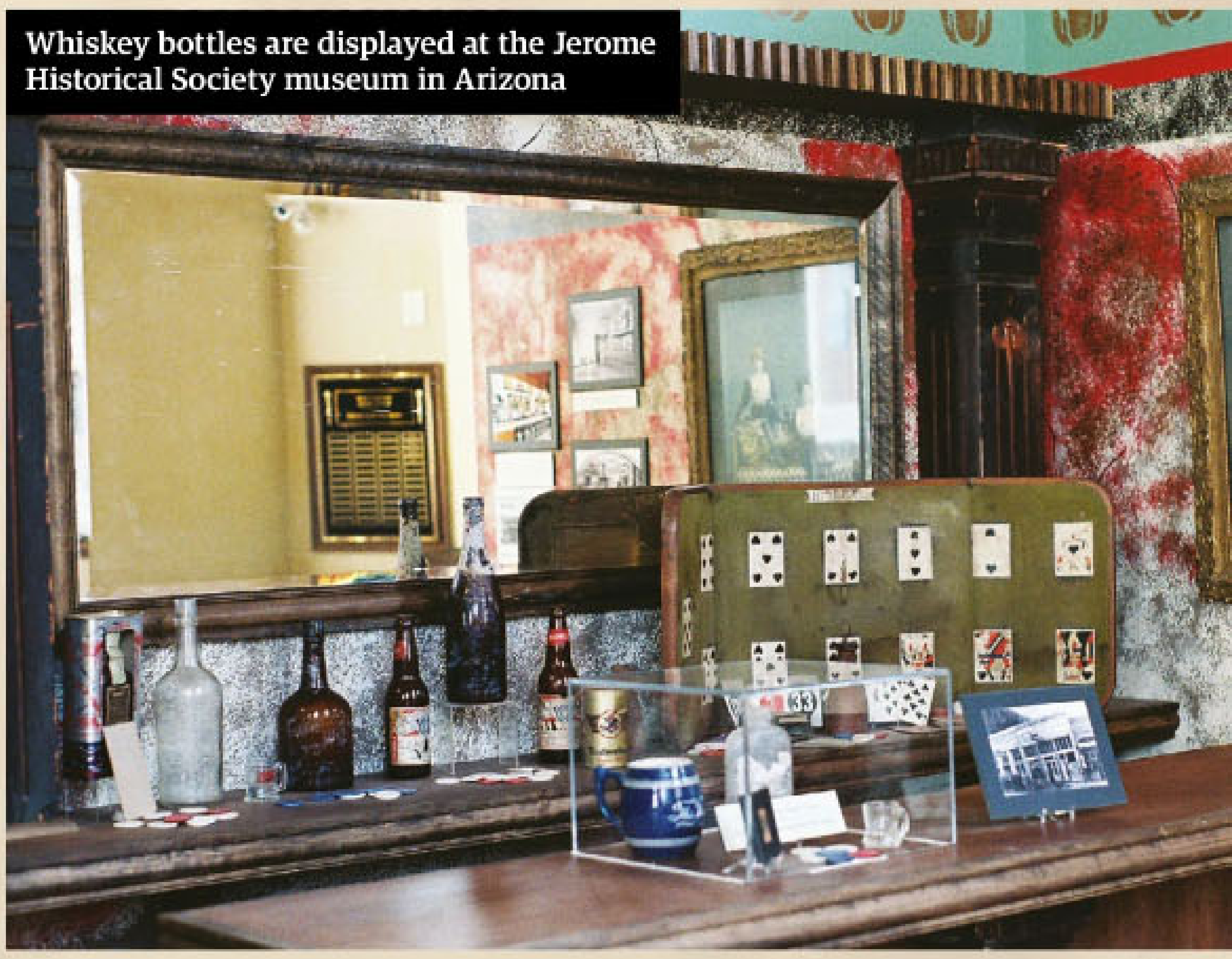
Nearly every town in the West, from small mining camps to large metropolises, featured a bawdy house or two. Some bordellos were no more than a 'crib', a small shack with one or two rooms. Others functioned as businesses above saloons, while palatial 'parlour houses' featured entertainment, dining, games of chance and a slew of pretty girls waiting upstairs.

In the case of cribs and saloons, the owner was often a man who rented the girls and took a hefty percentage of their earnings. This was also true in dance halls, where the dancers were required to entice customers into buying drinks by dancing and perhaps obtaining other services in private rooms upstairs or round the back. Madams were also known to rent cribs to the girls, who lived and entertained their customers in their small private apartments.

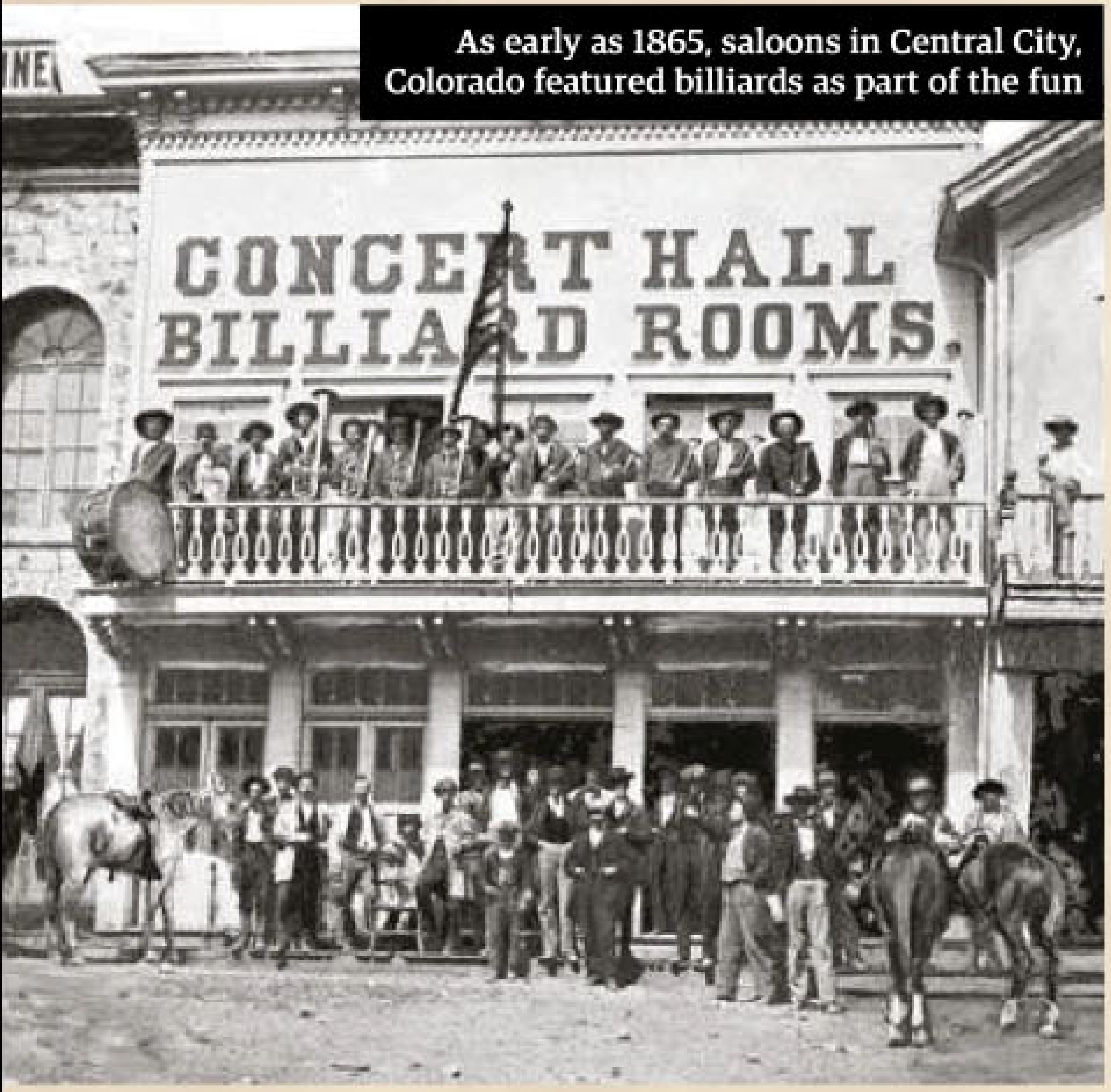
Parlour houses were also run by madams, who either owned their property outright or leased it from the landlord, often a prominent city businessman. In Prescott, Arizona, Mayor Morris Goldwater owned the former brothel of Madam Annie Hamilton. In larger cities like Butte, Montana, and San Francisco's Barbary Coast, parlour house girls often lived elsewhere and worked at the parlour house in shifts. In the mining towns, however, the girls lived on site, keeping their personal belongings and sometimes a small dog or cat as companions in the rooms where they worked.

'Soiled doves' (also known as sportin' women) were generally ostracised by decent society. They were required to pay monthly fines and were often subjected to arrest and jail time. Most were instructed to use the back door when entering theatres and some other public places, and many were only permitted to shop downtown on one day of the week. On those days, 'proper' women stayed at home and did laundry to prevent making contact with any harlots. A few managed to marry well and were able to leave the profession, but if a girl died of disease, overdose or suicide, her family would usually refuse to come to claim the body.

Cleo and Hattie Fay, with their male companion, put on such a risqué show that they were actually asked to leave the stage in Victor, Colorado



Whiskey bottles are displayed at the Jerome Historical Society museum in Arizona



As early as 1865, saloons in Central City, Colorado featured billiards as part of the fun

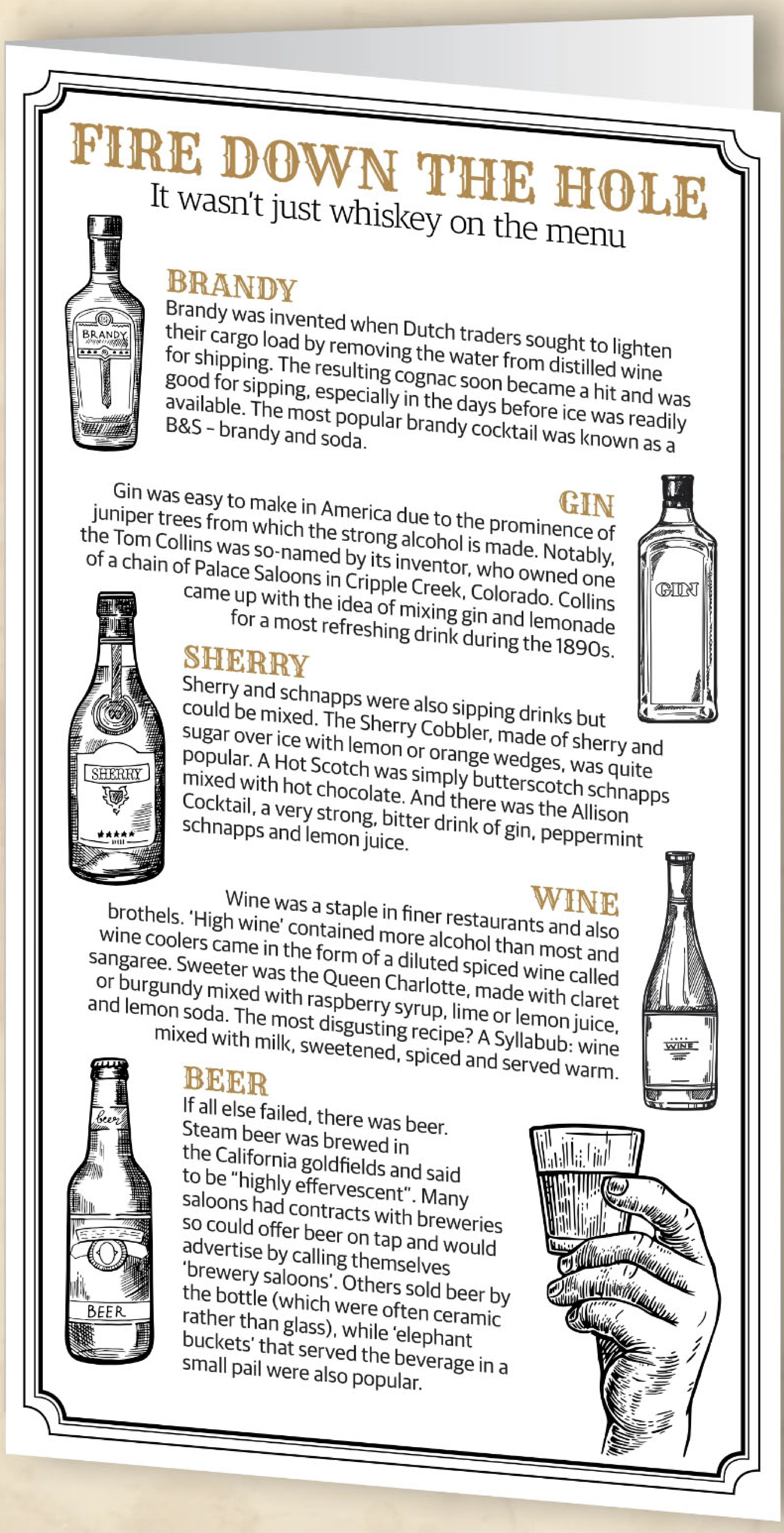
SALOON VITTLES

The customers who ate a little at the saloon were more likely to stay and drink more, so most kept a little bit of food out the back in order to entice them. Some places even went so far as to serve a free lunch with the purchase of one or more drinks, while others advertised a sandwich and a beer for as little as a nickel.

The contents of these meals – which were really just appetisers and certainly nothing filling – were inexpensive for the house and contained more than enough salt to make the customer thirsty. Boiled eggs, cheese, fried oysters, peanuts, potato chips, pretzels, rye bread, smoked meats and stewed beans usually did the trick and were often on the menu, becoming staples across the West. By spending as little as possible on food, saloon owners could still make sure to reap a profit from their paying customers – without losing too much from the freeloaders who managed to sneak food without buying anything.

Fancier taverns might actually serve daily specials to break up the monotony of the menu. The Occidental Saloon in Tombstone, where the notorious Doc Holliday favoured visiting in the 1870s, served up a full menu with a considerable amount of choice. The buffet included such tantalising dishes as Columbia River salmon, legs of lamb, loins of beef or pork, corned beef and cabbage, cream fricassee of chicken, ducks of mutton, suckling pigs and a whole host of pastry desserts – all for 50 cents.

Erickson's Bar was one of the best-known and most elegant drinking establishments around Portland, Oregon, in the late 1800s. The establishment spanned an entire city block and offered a free "dainty lunch" with "haunches of beef" and sourdough bread with house-made mustard, as well as Finnish flatbread with platters of sausage and Scandinavian cheese. The meal came with a 16-ounce schooner of beer, all costing the hungry customer just a nickel.



FIRE DOWN THE HOLE

It wasn't just whiskey on the menu

BRANDY

Brandy was invented when Dutch traders sought to lighten their cargo load by removing the water from distilled wine for shipping. The resulting cognac soon became a hit and was good for sipping, especially in the days before ice was readily available. The most popular brandy cocktail was known as a B&S – brandy and soda.

GIN

Gin was easy to make in America due to the prominence of juniper trees from which the strong alcohol is made. Notably, the Tom Collins was so-named by its inventor, who owned one of a chain of Palace Saloons in Cripple Creek, Colorado. Collins came up with the idea of mixing gin and lemonade for a most refreshing drink during the 1890s.

SHERRY

Sherry and schnapps were also sipping drinks but could be mixed. The Sherry Cobbler, made of sherry and sugar over ice with lemon or orange wedges, was quite popular. A Hot Scotch was simply butterscotch schnapps mixed with hot chocolate. And there was the Allison Cocktail, a very strong, bitter drink of gin, peppermint schnapps and lemon juice.

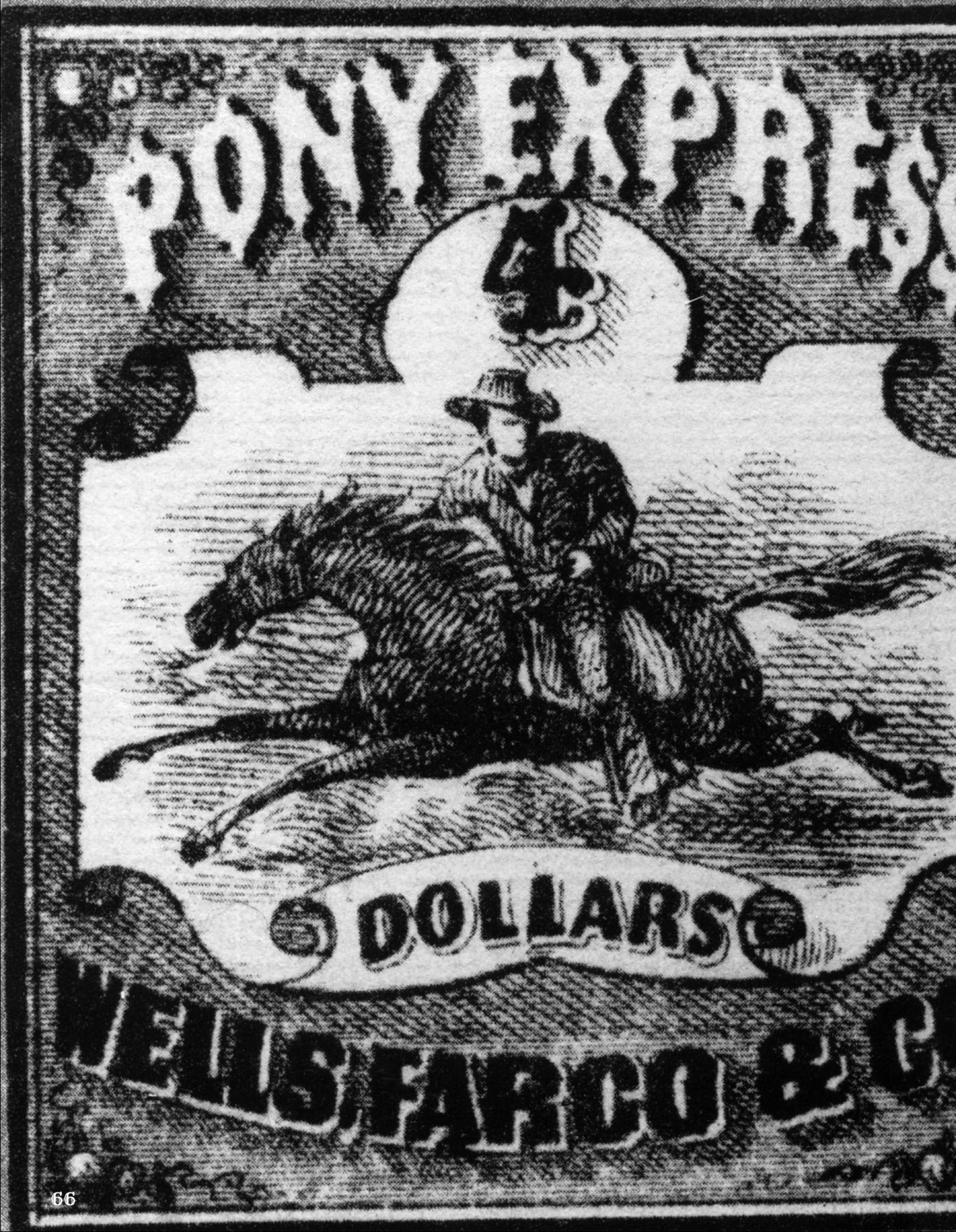
WINE

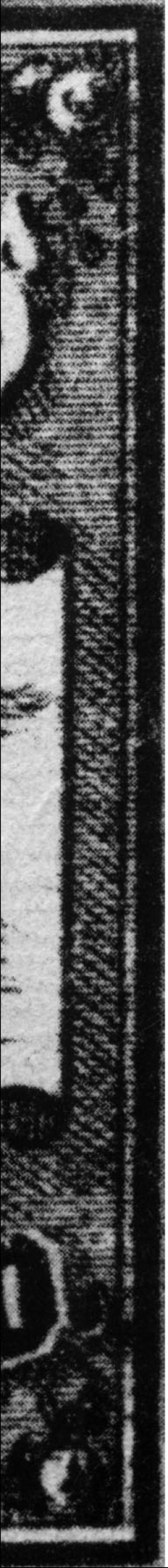
Wine was a staple in finer restaurants and also brothels. 'High wine' contained more alcohol than most and wine coolers came in the form of a diluted spiced wine called sangaree. Sweeter was the Queen Charlotte, made with claret or burgundy mixed with raspberry syrup, lime or lemon juice, and lemon soda. The most disgusting recipe? A Syllabub: wine mixed with milk, sweetened, spiced and served warm.

BEER

If all else failed, there was beer. Steam beer was brewed in the California goldfields and said to be "highly effervescent". Many saloons had contracts with breweries so could offer beer on tap and would advertise by calling themselves 'brewery saloons'. Others sold beer by the bottle (which were often ceramic rather than glass), while 'elephant buckets' that served the beverage in a small pail were also popular.

© Images courtesy of Jan MacKell Collins


PONY EXPRES
4
DOLLARS
WELLS, FARGO & C



THE PONY EXPRESS

Arduous, dangerous and vital to expanding the western frontier, the legendary Pony Express was once the fastest courier service in the Old West

In the days before the transcontinental telegraph allowed communication with the tap of a Morse key, the famed Pony Express was the principal means of communication between the Midwest and California. Founded in the late 1850s by William Russell, Alexander Majors and William Waddell, it became the first major courier firm in history.

Originally the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company, it operated out of Leavenworth, Kansas. At its peak the company employed some 6,000 people, but only for around 19 months before the encroaching Transcontinental Railroad, and with it the telegraph, caused the Express to hit the financial buffers.

Short-lived the Pony Express may have been, but its legacy is with us to this day. Tales of the Express and legendary riders such as William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody and Robert 'Pony Bob' Haslam have passed into American history and folklore. The lone rider risking everything to make sure a delivery would get through is as much a part of Old West mythology as gunslingers and cattle barons.

> The company was a commercial failure. It grossed some $90,000 before expenses and taxes, but lost $200,000

The Pony Express was by far one of the less risky ways to send messages and packages between the Midwest and California. The California Gold Rush of 1848 had drawn thousands of would-be millionaires, the famous '49ers,' from all over the world, keen to make their fortunes in the new goldfields. With the influx of people came money, infrastructure and the beginnings of the West Coast as it is today.

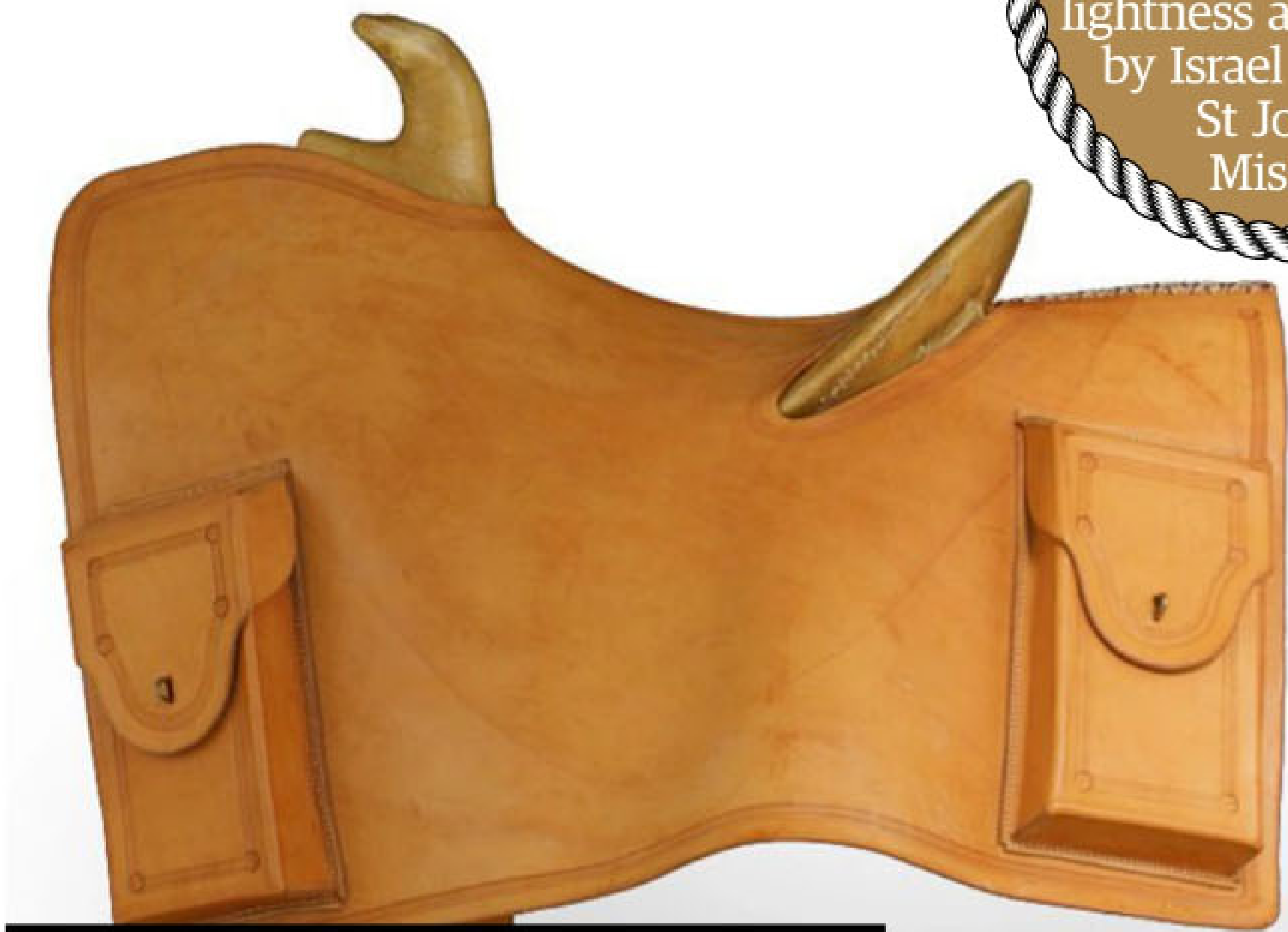
Where spaces were empty tent cities sprang up, their populations lured west by the chance of striking it rich. From the tent cities rose streets of wooden shacks. Some of those crudely built shanties would soon evolve into major Californian cities such as San Francisco. With a huge increase in population (mostly from immigrant stock) and a profusion of new businesses, the need to communicate quickly and easily between East and West had never been more pressing.

Based in what's now America's Midwest, the Pony Express became the fastest service available, delivering mail and packages from their advance base in St Joseph, Missouri to California faster than any other means. Wagon trains, stagecoaches or risking Cape Horn aboard a mail boat were, the Pony Express founders felt, far too slow. A lone rider could do what many said couldn't be done - deliver between Missouri and California - in ten days instead of as many weeks.

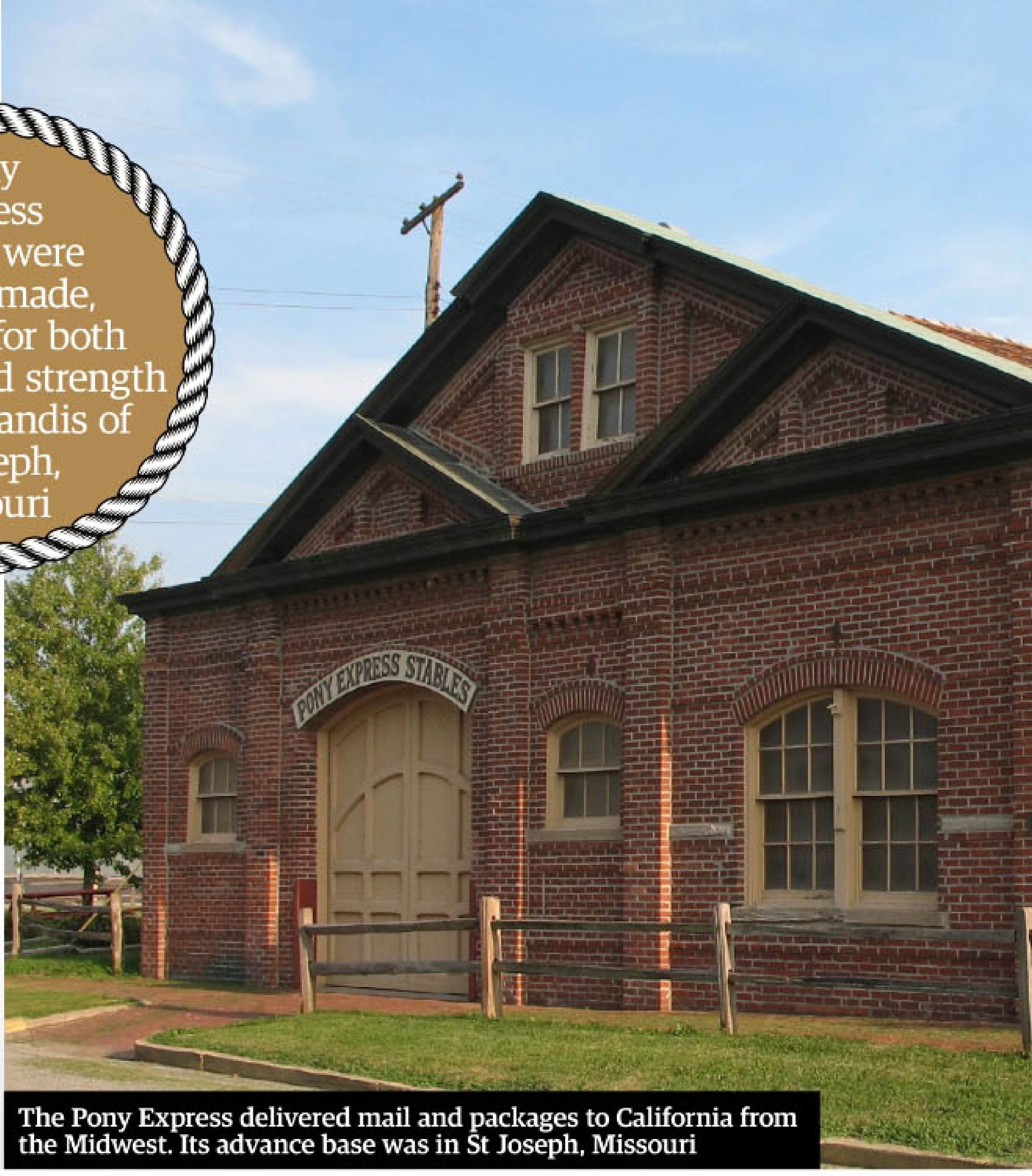
Riders rode short distances between stations set up along a carefully chosen route. Shorter distances allowed faster riding without damaging the horses. In turn, the ten-day delivery time considered by many to be impossible was virtually standard practice. When the Pony Express began trading in the winter of 1860 it employed around 120 riders delivering from station to station on a relay basis between 184 stations between the company's advance base in St Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California. Some 400 horses and hundreds of other workers kept the Express rolling. As time passed and demand increased, the company quickly grew.

The job was well-paid for its time (a monthly salary of $100 when farmhands were lucky to make that much per quarter) and highly sought-after. Waddell, Majors and Russell could have paid less, but wanted the best available riders. They also wanted the smallest and lightest. To ease the burden on horses and allow faster rides, only men weighing 56 kilograms or less were hired. The company also liked young, fit men. Fitness was essential to ride the Pony

Pony Express saddles were custom-made, designed for both lightness and strength by Israel Landis of St Joseph, Missouri



The legendary 'mochila' mail pouch. The rule was simple – deliver at all costs, regardless of personal risks



The Pony Express delivered mail and packages to California from the Midwest. Its advance base was in St Joseph, Missouri

Express. Young men born and raised on the frontier would also be less afraid of risking death to protect and deliver their cargo.

Being a Pony Express rider earned respect and money, but not without considerable risk. Many riders travelled alone, relying on their own experience, survival skills and luck. They had to. They were at constant risk from hostile natives, outlaws, accidents, illness and plain bad luck. Without an escort if they hit trouble between towns they were, in every sense, on their own. Only the bravest and most skilful need apply. As an advertisement of the time honestly, but unnervingly, is alleged to have put it:

'Wanted: Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over eighteen. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred.'

The sheer length of the route was staggering for a lone rider. From St Joseph riders travelled some 3,000 kilometres. The early going broadly followed parts of the Oregon and California Trails as far as Fort Bridger, Wyoming. From Fort Bridger they headed for Salt Lake City, Utah via a part of the Mormon Trail known as the Hastings Cutoff. From Salt Lake City the Central Nevada Route took them to Carson City, Nevada and on to Sacramento, California.

And they had to do it in ten days, the time set by both the company and the first Express delivery.

The first westbound Pony Express started out of St Joseph on 3 April 1860, arriving in Sacramento on 14 April before continuing up river to San Francisco by ferry. In the inaugural pouch were 49 letters, five private telegrams and some assorted papers.

With the ten-day delivery time now proven possible, all riders were expected to keep to it. The eastbound route was equally arduous. Like the first westbound Express it also started on 3 April 1860. Leaving from San Francisco, it arrived on the same day as its westbound partner, 14 April, in St Joseph.

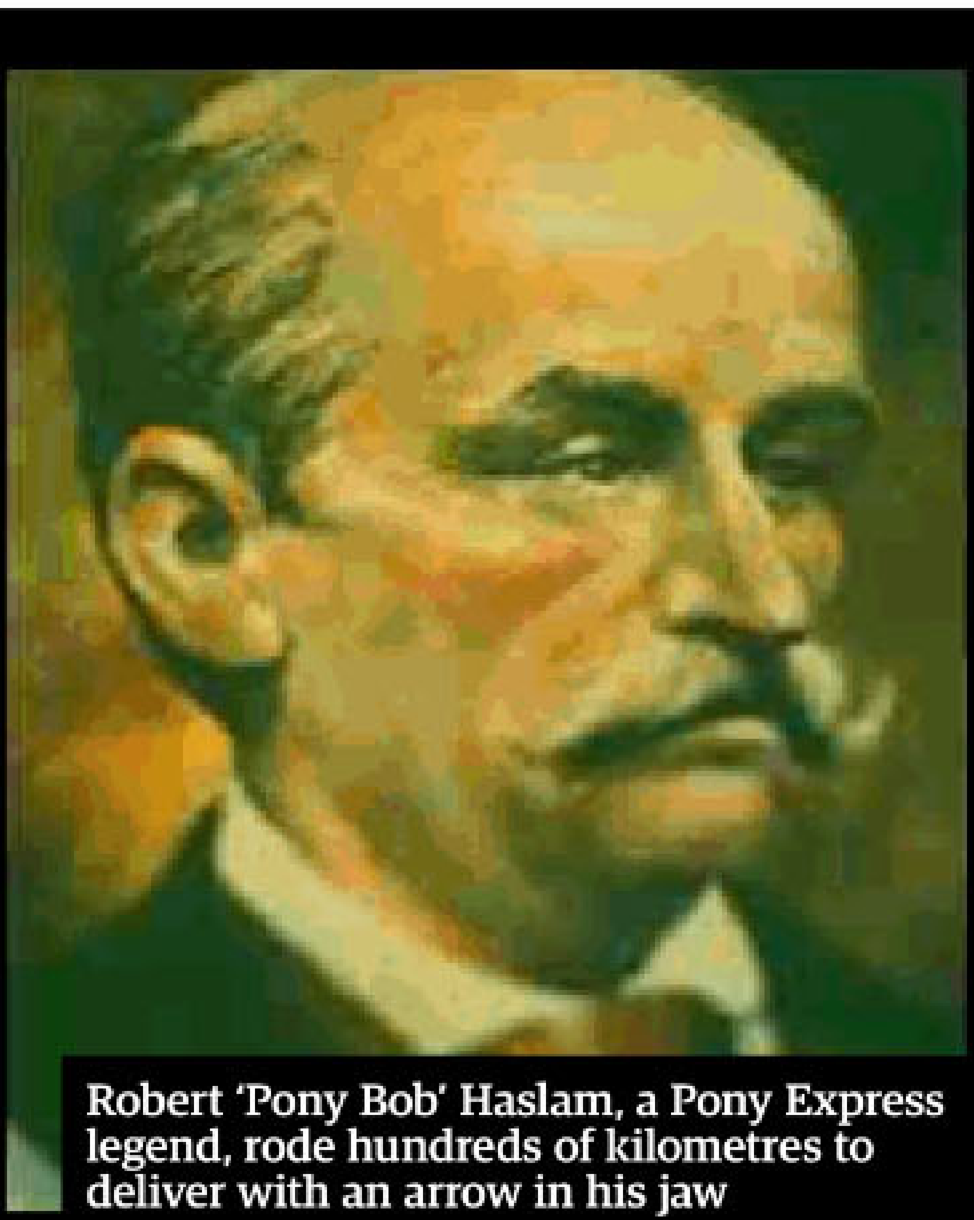
The physical demands were enormous, but they were the easy part. Riders carried their cargo in a padlocked pouch called a 'mochila'. They rode astride the mochila. When they dismounted the mochila went with them. New riders were told in no uncertain terms that losing their lives was less serious to the company than losing their pouch. If a rider had to kill or die to ensure a delivery was made, then those were simply occupational hazards.

Riders routinely went armed, usually with revolvers or carbines (a shorter, lighter form of rifle or musket). They often carried knives, although these were more for general use than self-defence. Their main protections were speed and the relatively short distances between stations. Less conspicuous and faster than a wagon train or stagecoach, riders hoped to run or hide rather than fight.

The most dangerous time for the Pony Express riders was between May and June of 1860. The Paiute War, a series of raids and attacks by Paiute natives in Nevada, significantly disrupted the Express schedule. Sporadic attacks continued long afterward. Williams Station, located on Nevada's Carson River, was attacked by a Paiute war party and burned to the ground. Five men died in the Paiute attack. The war caused the company to temporarily cease operations rather than unnecessarily risk its riders and their cargos.

But, while the Paiute War was a temporary threat, the encroaching railroad and telegraph were far more permanent. The railroad allowed the speedy and relatively secure shipment of heavier items.

The legendary 'Pony Bob'

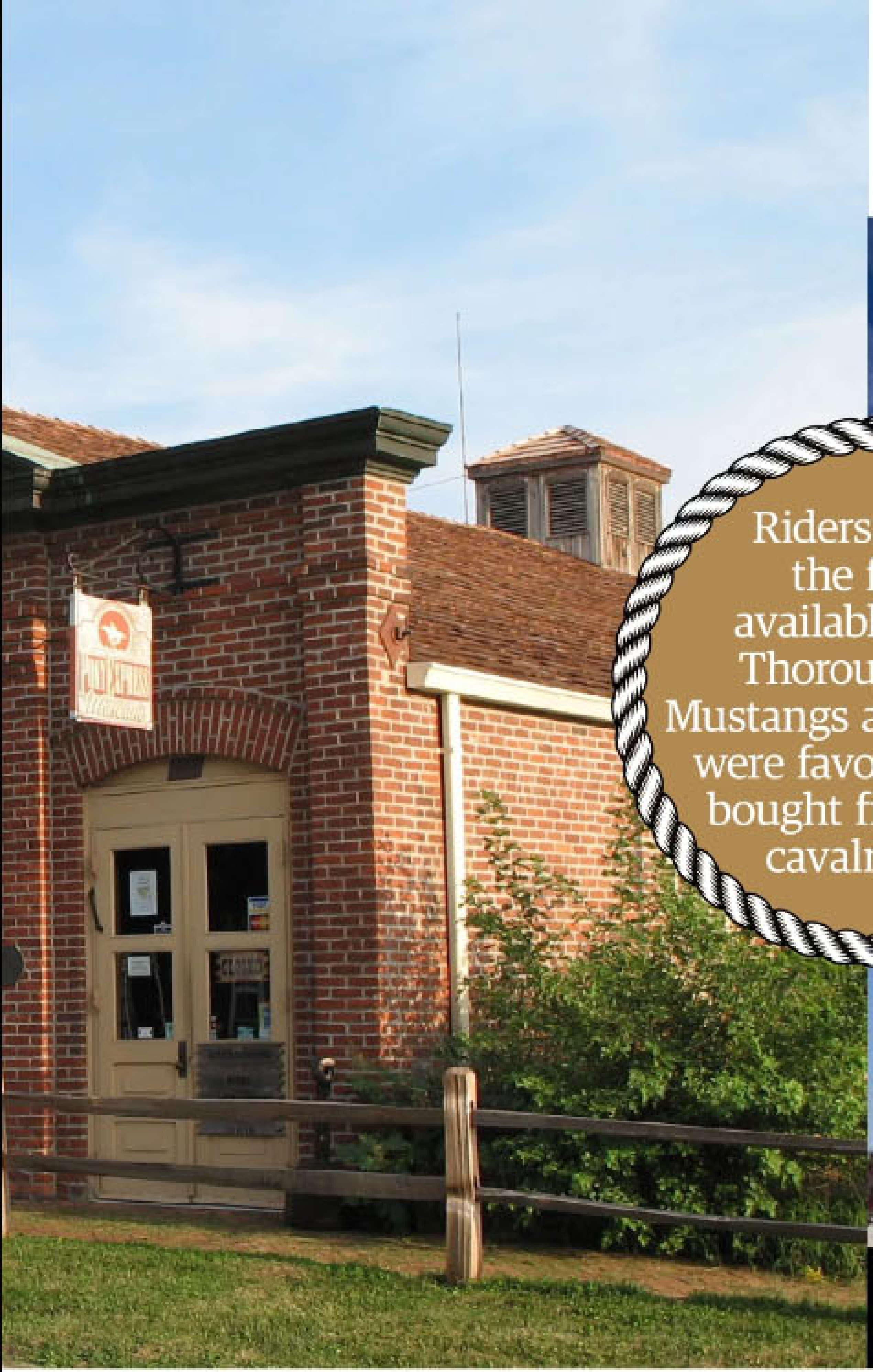


Robert 'Pony Bob' Haslam, a Pony Express legend, rode hundreds of kilometres to deliver with an arrow in his jaw

Robert Haslam was one of the company's most respected, best-known riders. An Englishman born in 1840, Haslam emigrated in the 1850s. He was assigned a difficult 120-kilometre ride between Friday's Station in Lake Tahoe and Buckland's Station near Fort Churchill.

His greatest ride was record-breaking. In May 1860, carrying President Lincoln's inaugural speech, it would have been a regular run if not for native attacks. At Buckland's Station, his relief rider refused to take over, terrified of native war parties. Haslam continued to Smith's Creek, riding some 300 kilometres in eight hours without rest.

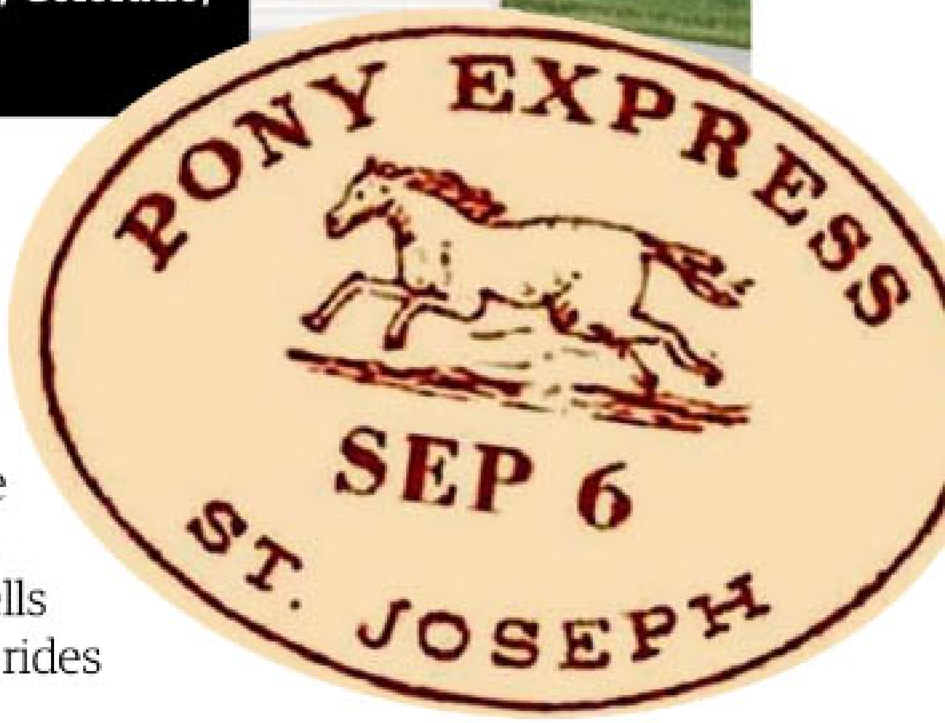
Returning with westbound mail, he found Cold Springs Station wrecked and the stationmaster killed. Haslam also took an arrow through his jaw. Riding on despite agonising pain, he still reached Buckland's Station where the arrow was removed, along with three of his teeth. His round-trip should have lasted only 240 kilometres. Instead, it entered company history at over 600 kilometres, the longest on record. A close friend of 'Buffalo Bill' Cody, Haslam worked for the US Army as a scout. When Cody negotiated Sitting Bull's surrender in 1890, Haslam accompanied him. He died in poverty in Chicago in 1912, Cody paying for his tombstone.



THE PONY EXPRESS TRAIL
1860 - 1861

Riders wanted the fastest available horses. Thoroughbreds, Mustangs and Morgans were favoured, often bought from Army cavalry units

A monument to the Pony Express, sculpted by Brenda Daniher, Julesburg, Colorado; Right: Like all mail, it had its own postmark. This comes from a westbound letter sent from St Joseph to Sacramento in 1860



There were three railroad companies building the Transcontinental Railroad. The Western Pacific Railroad Company built the line from Oakland Long Wharf near San Francisco to Sacramento. From Sacramento the Central Pacific Railroad Company built the line to Promontory Summit, Utah. From the East came the Union Pacific, building from the railroad's eastern terminus at Council Bluffs near Omaha, Nebraska, meeting the Central Pacific at Promontory Summit.

The railroad didn't open until 1869 but, as it converged on Promontory Summit, with the track came the telegraph. The Pony Express found itself increasingly redundant. Mainly delivering letters and printed telegrams, its principle cargo was replaced by the faster telegraph. What had been ridden from St Joseph to Sacramento in a then-unprecedented ten days could be sent in Morse code almost instantly and at a far cheaper rate. The beginning of the railroad marked the beginning of the end for the Pony Express.

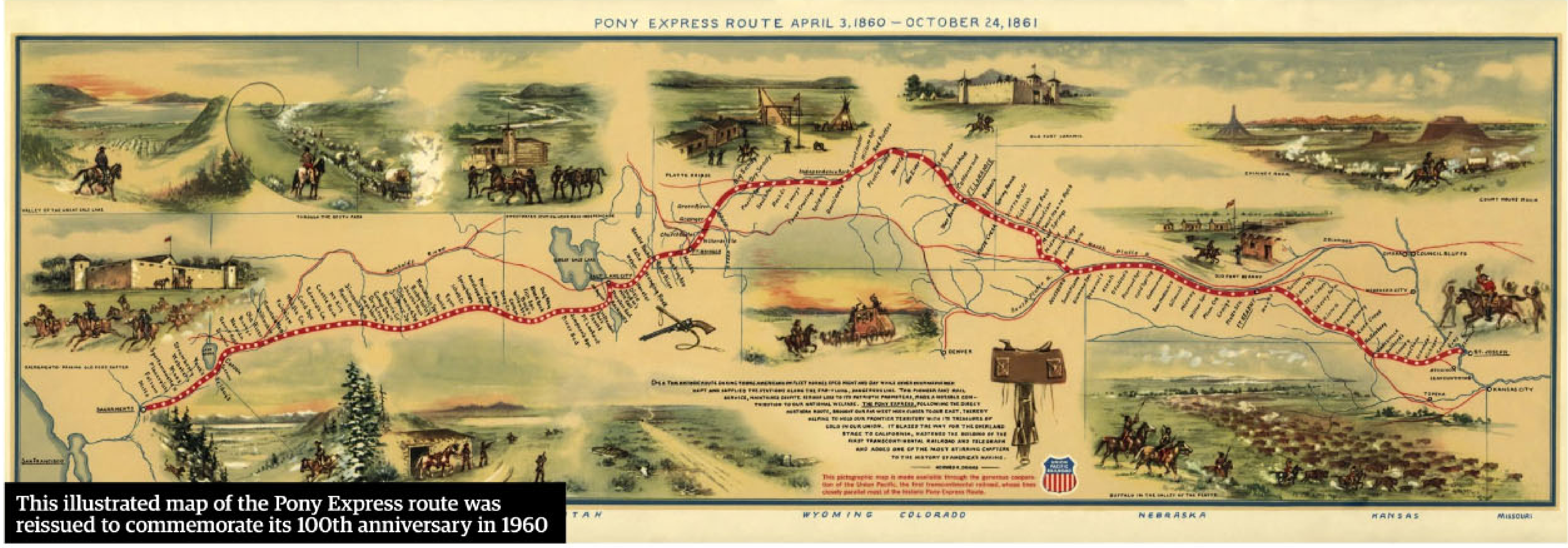
Sending a half-ounce letter initially cost $5, about $130 in today's money. Very expensive, but customers got what they paid for

During its existence the Pony Express delivered some 35,000 letters. Failing to win a government contract, which went instead to the Butterfield Overland Mail Stage Line, worse was to follow. The beginning of the American Civil War on 12 April 1861 limited the Express route to between Sacramento and Salt Lake City. On 26 October 1861 the Pony Express closed only days after the Transcontinental Railroad linked Sacramento with Omaha and Salt Lake City. The Express had built itself on being faster and safer than other delivery methods. Now, it found itself rendered obsolete.

The 'Stagecoach King' Ben Holladay bought the stations for his coaches. With the end of the Civil War in 1865 Holladay sold his former Pony Express assets and the remnants of the rival Butterfield company to Wells Fargo. The long rides were over.

The company is long gone, but its image and legacy remain. The first US postage stamp to mark a historical event was issued in 1869, commemorating the Pony Express. Further Pony Express stamps were issued in 1940 and 1960, marking the 80th and 100th anniversaries of the company's formation. Today the National Pony Express Association exists to preserve the history behind the legend. Until the 1990s Wells Fargo still used the Pony Express logo on its armoured trucks and security uniforms.

The riders are long gone, but their legacy remains.

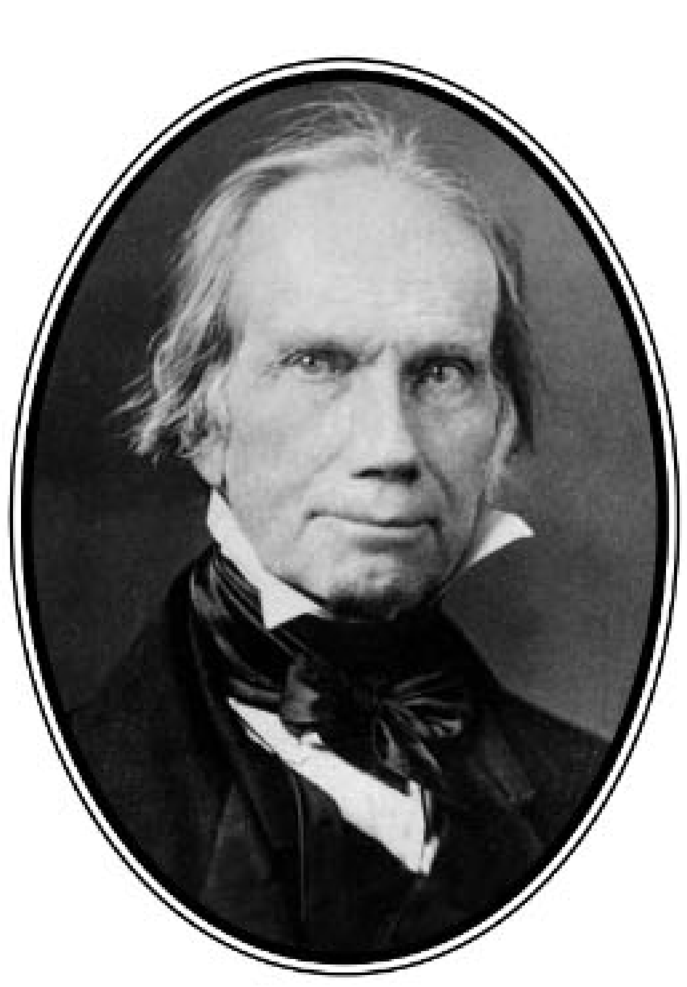


This illustrated map of the Pony Express route was reissued to commemorate its 100th anniversary in 1960

© Alamy, Wiki, Americasroof

HOW THE PATH TO THE WEST LED TO WAR

As the United States spread westward, one question divided the nation: would the new states be Slave States or Free States?



Above: The abolitionist John Brown, pictured in 1859, not long before the raid on Harper's Ferry

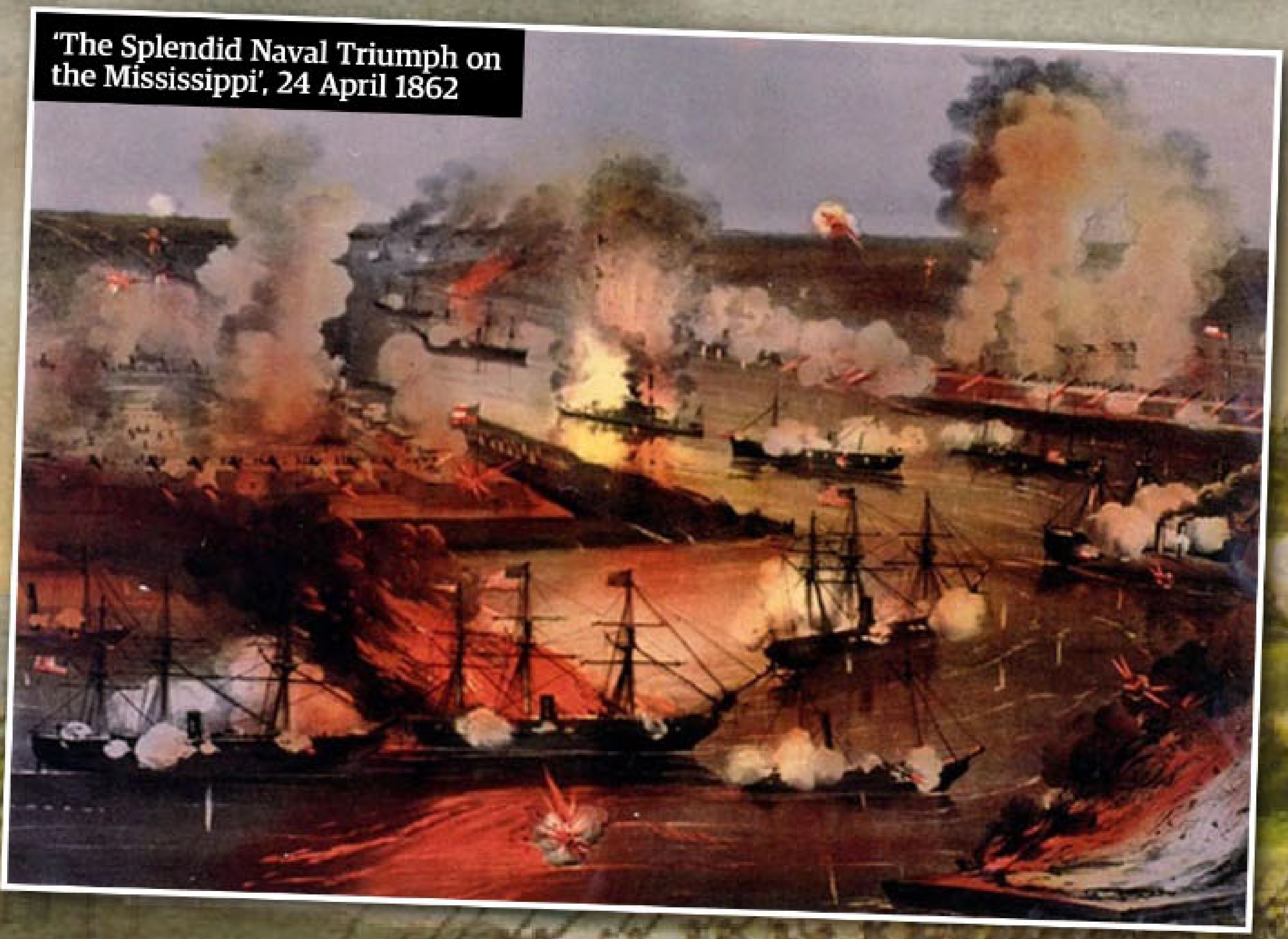
Right: Henry Clay, the man who brokered the Missouri Compromise

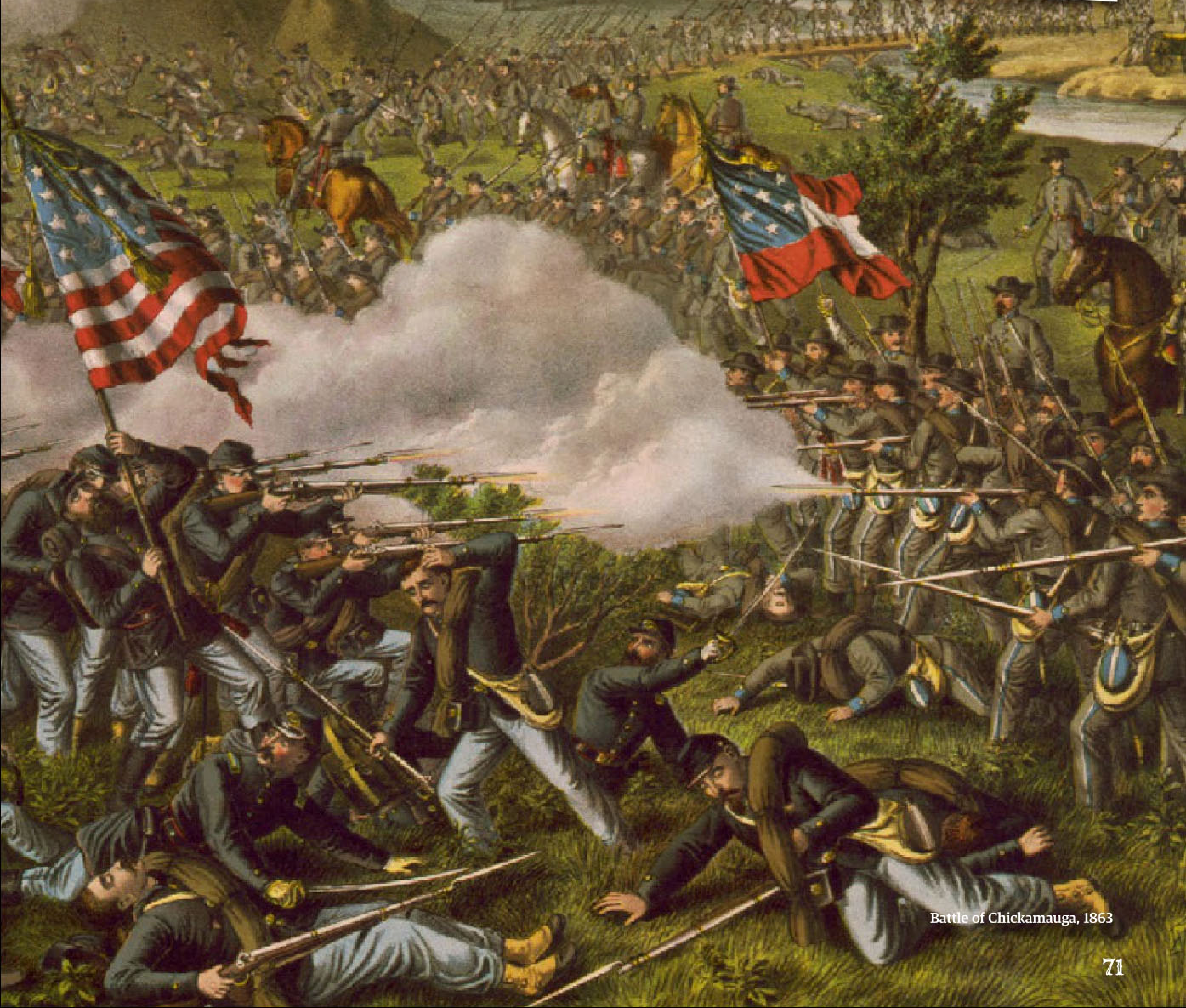
From the dawn of the 19th century America had been divided. Divided culturally, politically, geographically, even religiously about the issue of slavery. But the Union had been preserved by the division being equal. Half the 22 states comprising the United States were Free States and half were Slave States. But when Missouri petitioned to join the Union in 1819 as a Slave State, that delicate balance came under threat.

Missouri was part of the Louisiana Purchase. This was when, in 1803, the United States (at the time the country ran roughly south from the western edge of the Great Lakes) bought a vast tract of land from France. To give an idea of just how big the Louisiana Purchase was, it doubled the size of the United States, adding 828 million square miles to the republic's territory (that's nearly four times the area of Britain). The new territory was bounded by the Mississippi River in the east, the Rocky Mountains in the west, Canada in the north and the Gulf of Mexico in the south. It was just huge.

What would later become the state of Missouri was a part of the Purchase and when it had passed the population threshold it applied for admittance to the United States. As a new state, it would be entitled to two senators in the Senate, thus upsetting the balance between Free and Slave States. As rancour grew between the opposing sides, Henry Clay, the speaker of the House of Representatives, brokered a compromise whereby Missouri entered the Union as a Slave State but, at the same time, so did Maine as a Free State. Thus the balance would be maintained. But, critically, the bill as passed also decreed that

Victor Hugo tried to gain a pardon for John Brown. "There is something more frightening than Cain killing Abel… Washington killing Spartacus"


'The Splendid Naval Triumph on the Mississippi', 24 April 1862


Battle of Chickamauga, 1863

slavery should not be allowed north of the line of latitude at 36 degree 30 minutes, with the exception of Missouri, whereas any future states south of this line would be Slave States. Thus slavery was extended westwards, with the same north/south divide.

Although the Missouri Compromise made a way forward for the states, a number of American statesmen could see it sowed the seeds for future conflict. John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States, wrote in his diary, "Take it for granted that the present is a mere preamble – a title page to a great, tragic volume."

The issue came to the fore once more in 1849 when California petitioned to join the Union. The territory's population had rocketed following the discovery of gold in 1848, drawing in people from both the Free States, who called themselves free-soilers, and the Slave States, who adopted the label Chivs (short for chivalry). Such were the continuing tensions in California over the issue that even when it joined the Union in 1850 as a Free State, nine years later two of its most eminent political representatives, Senator David Broderick and ex-chief justice of the California Supreme Court David Terry, fought a duel over their political disagreements on the issue. The men had once been friends, but had fallen out over the issue of slavery. Terry, the advocate of slavery, had taken the precaution to practise beforehand with the weapons they would be using for the duel, two Belgian .58 calibre pistols. Broderick, the free-soiler, had not.

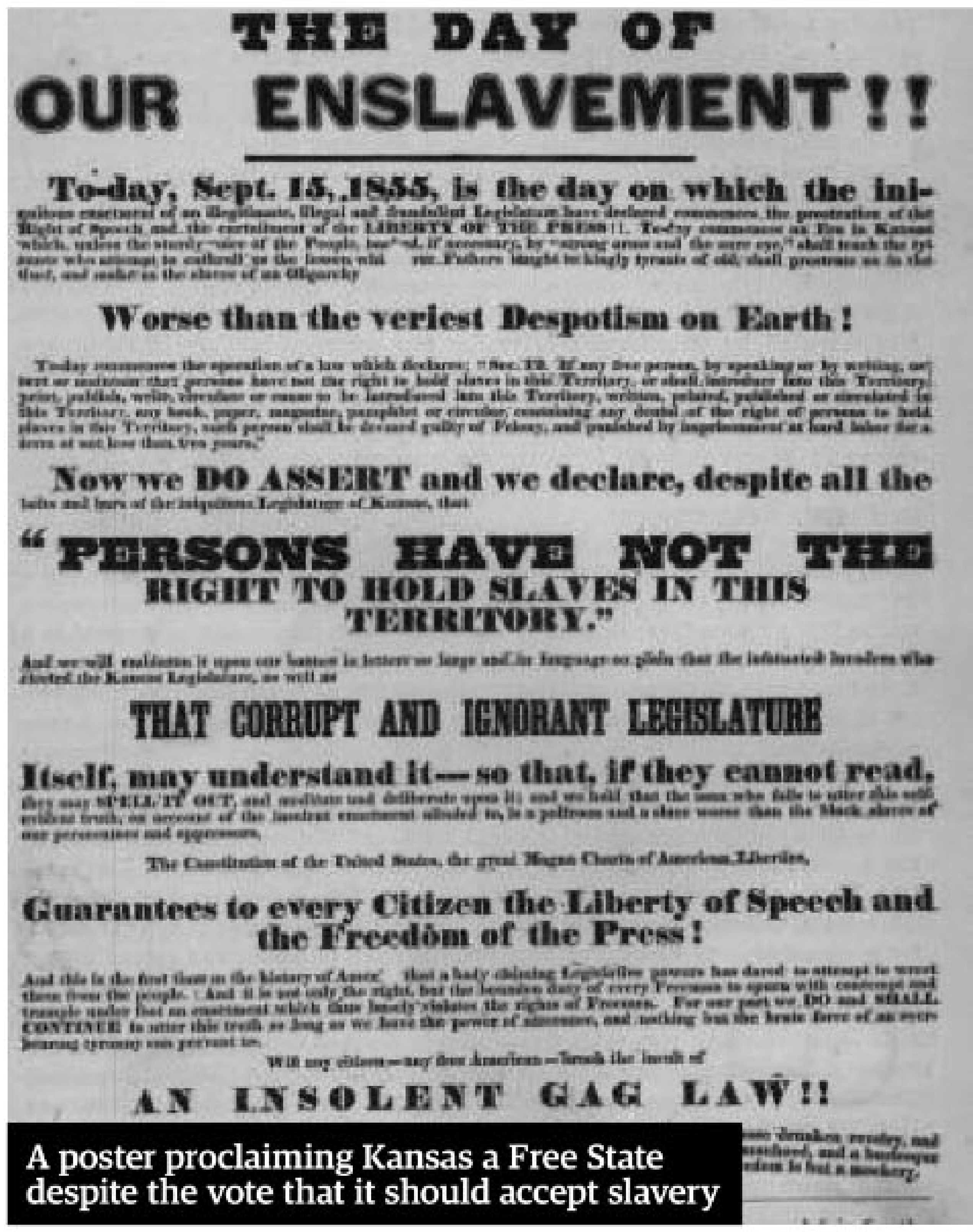
Come the duel, Broderick's gun misfired just before the final count. Hearing the count up to three, and with his gun already having fired, Broderick made no effort to move but stood tall. Terry, knowing that his opponent had already shot, had the option to fire to miss. He didn't. He shot Broderick square in the chest. The senator died three days later. "They killed me because I am opposed to the extension of slavery and a corrupt administration," he said on his death bed.

The idea of Manifest Destiny, that it was America's duty to spread west, found its greatest support among Democrats

Tensions between Free and Slave states deepened in the decade following California's accession in 1850 as a Free State. To mollify the Slave States, Congress had agreed that while California would be free, the people of the New Mexico and Utah territories would decide whether they would be Slave or Free States. The compromise also required that people in Free States help to capture runaway slaves. This led to a considerable heightening of tension between Free and Slave states, as both took up opposing positions on the moral high ground, the people of Free States objecting to being co-opted as slave-catchers while those in Slave States saw their northern brethren as flouting the law.

After an anti-slavery speech, Senator Charles Sumner attacked pro-slavery Congressman Preston Brooks

As America expanded westwards, the issue of whether the states petitioning for accession to the Union should be Slave or Free came up more and more frequently. Just four years after California's accession, Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas made another attempt at a solution. As Slave States had no interest in allowing new Free States into the Union, the westward expansion of the United States had stopped at the Mississippi River. To get it going again, he proposed a new bill, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which decreed that popular sovereignty would decide the issue of whether these new states should be Free or Slave. Many of Douglas's fellow Democrats saw this as a ploy to expand slavery and they began to join with other politicians into what would become the Republican Party, united by its opposition to slavery.


THE DAY OF
OUR ENSLAVEMENT!!

To-day, Sept. 15, 1855, is the day on which the ini-

Worse than the veriest Despotism on Earth!

Now we DO ASSERT and we declare, despite all the

"PERSONS HAVE NOT THE RIGHT TO HOLD SLAVES IN THIS TERRITORY."

THAT CORRUPT AND IGNORANT LEGISLATURE

Itself, may understand it—so that, if they cannot read,

Guarantees to every Citizen the Liberty of Speech and the Freedom of the Press!

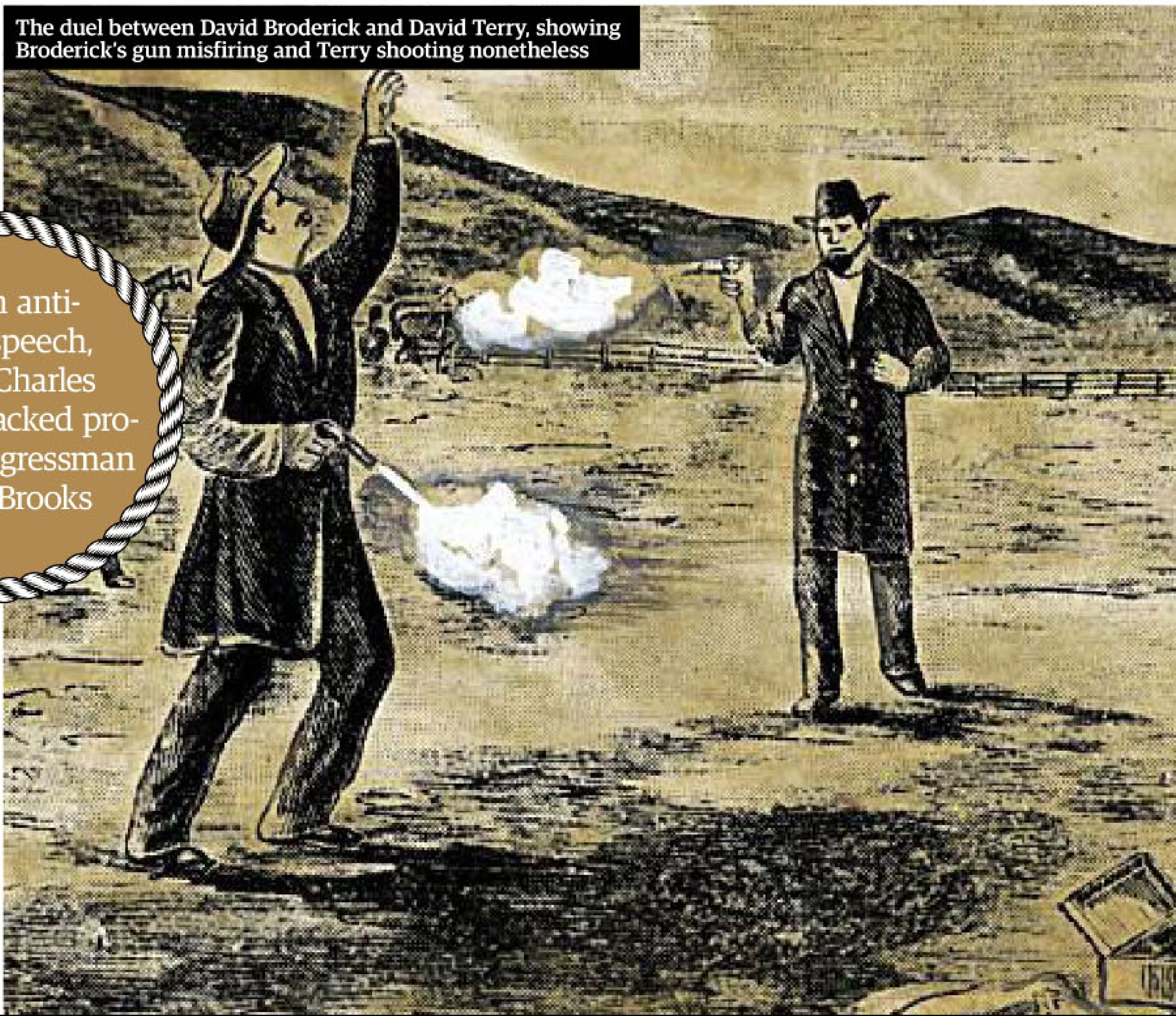
AN INSOLENT GAG LAW!!

A poster proclaiming Kansas a Free State despite the vote that it should accept slavery

What's more, when delegates came to be elected in Kansas to decide whether the state would be Free or Slave, the votes were skewed by people crossing the border from Missouri to vote for Kansas becoming a Slave State. Indeed, so widespread was the fraud that two votes were cast for every registered voter. Thus, the Kansas legislature passed pro-slavery laws. But so outraged were Free State supporting Kansans at this fraud that they began to arm themselves, creating a parallel legislature, while increasingly violent confrontations broke out between Free Staters and slavery supporters, who called themselves the Law and Order Party. It was a nasty conflict in which neither side was blameless. In revenge for a murder, Free Staters burned and terrorised pro-slavery settlers, before being themselves pursued and surrounded in the town of Lawrence. In the ensuing siege, abolitionist women smuggled guns to the besieged Free Staters hidden in their petticoats. The siege was called off in the midst of a cold winter, but when the slavery supporters returned to Lawrence in the spring, they burned the Free State Hotel and threw the press of the abolitionist paper, *The Herald Of Freedom*, into the river. Back in the east, Republican-supporting papers wrote this up as the 'Sack of Lawrence'.

Northern farmers did not necessarily object to slavery but they did not want to compete with low-cost slave farms

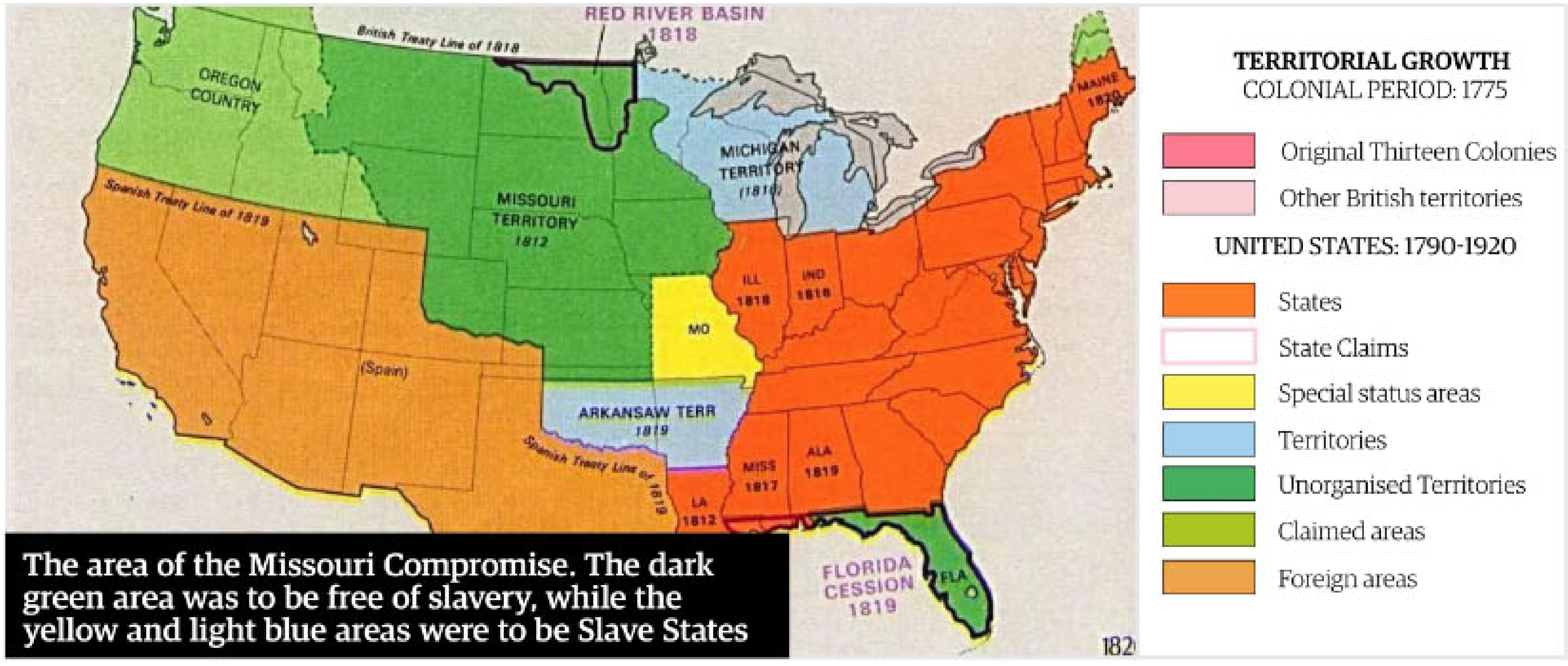
The duel between David Broderick and David Terry, showing Broderick's gun misfiring and Terry shooting nonetheless



One abolitionist, a man named John Brown (1800-1859), on his way to help in the defence of Lawrence, heard that he was too late but, enraged by the events, he led a party of men to Pottawatomie Creek where they murdered five pro-slavery settlers. After what came to be called the Pottawatomie Massacre, Brown took up guerilla tactics, fighting skirmishes against pro-slavery militias.

Some historians consider these small battles the first of the Civil War. And with the notoriety Brown had acquired through his actions in Kansas, he was able to gather funds for his attack on Harper's Ferry in West Virginia, where he hoped to gain arms to raise a general slave revolt. The raid failed, and Brown was captured, tried and hanged for treason. The attack so inflamed passions on either side that it all but made war inevitable. On the morning of his execution, Brown wrote, "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood."

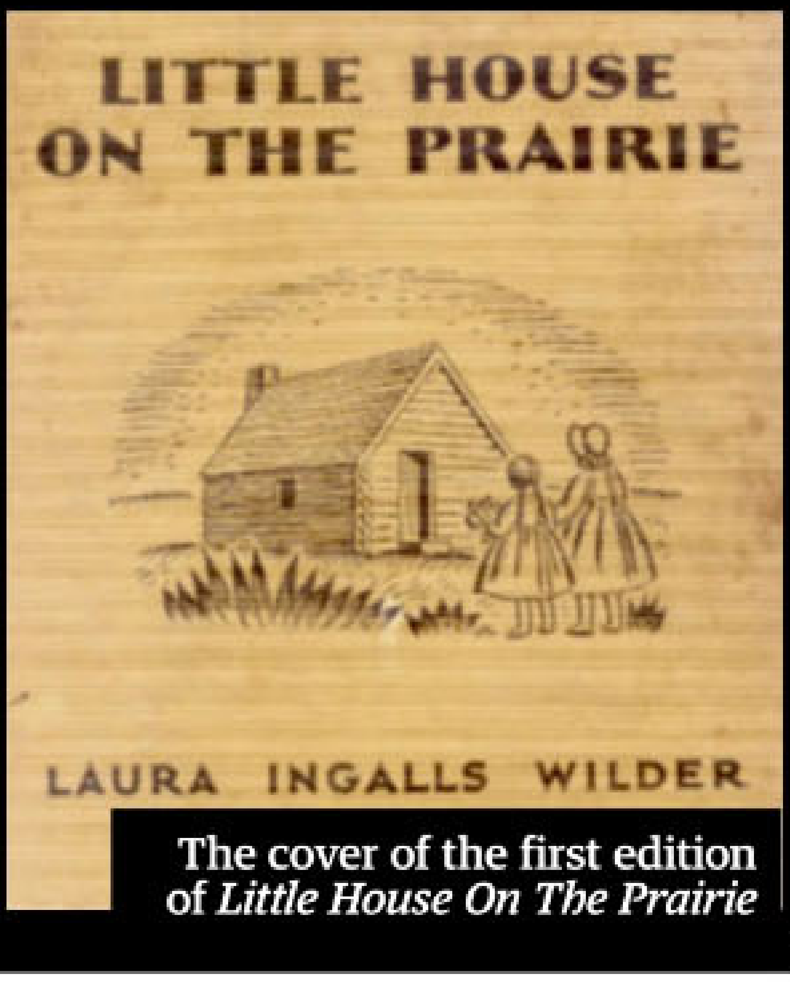
Within 18 months, the American Civil War began. As for the West itself, the Civil War and its aftermath transformed it. In particular, three Acts signed into law by Abraham Lincoln in 1862 were to prove transformative: the Homestead Act (for which see the box), the Pacific Railway Act which facilitated the first transcontinental railroad, and the Morrill Act, which provided federal land to states to fund agricultural colleges, which went on train generations of ranchers and farmers. With these laws in place, all the foundations had been laid to 'win' the West. For its Native American inhabitants, it meant the loss of ancestral lands but many newly-freed slaves found homes there, settling in towns such as Nicodemus, Kansas. In the end, the Civil War not only bound North and South together, but it also brought the West into communion with the rest of the United States.


RED RIVER BASIN
1818
British Treaty Line of 1818
OREGON COUNTRY
Spanish Treaty Line of 1819
MISSOURI TERRITORY
1812
MICHIGAN TERRITORY
(1818)
ILL 1818
IND 1816
MO
(Spain)
ARKANSAW TERR 1819
Spanish Treaty Line of 1819
MISS 1817
ALA 1819
LA 1812
MAINE 1820
FLORIDA CESSION 1819
FLA
182
TERRITORIAL GROWTH
COLONIAL PERIOD: 1775
Original Thirteen Colonies
Other British territories
UNITED STATES: 1790-1920
States
State Claims
Special status areas
Territories
Unorganised Territories
Claimed areas
Foreign areas

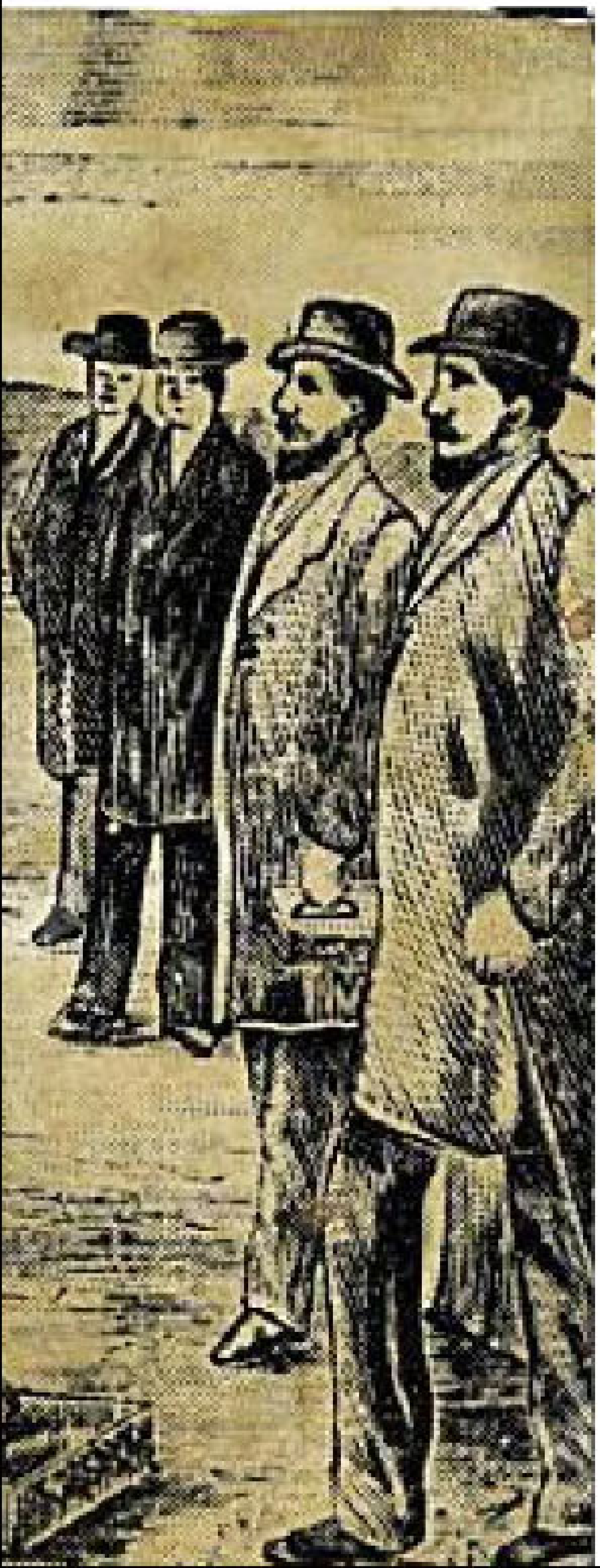
The area of the Missouri Compromise. The dark green area was to be free of slavery, while the yellow and light blue areas were to be Slave States

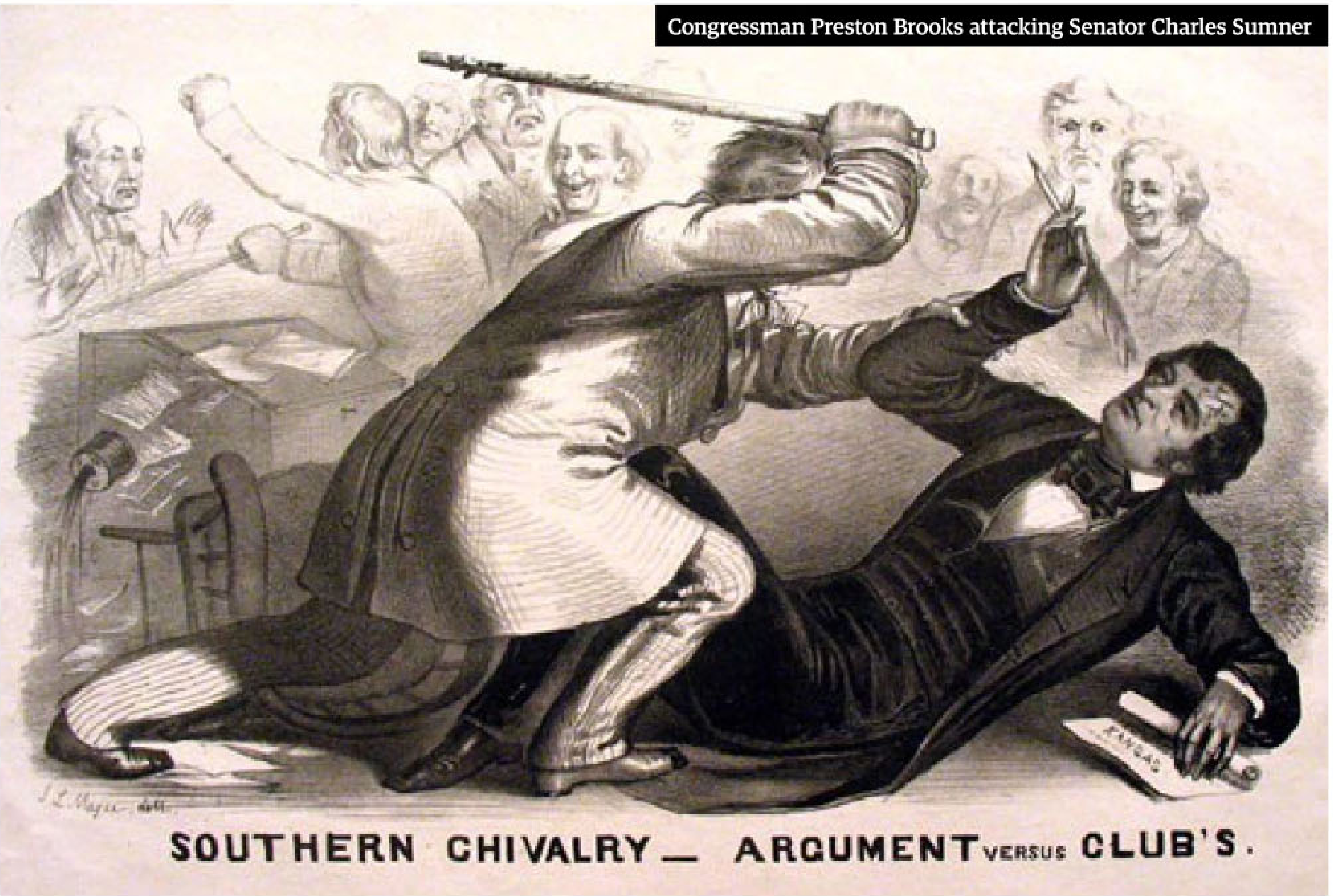
✶ Lots of houses on the prairie ✶

The *Little House On The Prairie*, along with many others, was the direct result of the Homestead Act. President Lincoln signed it into law on 20 May 1862 and by its statute it allowed 160 acres of unclaimed public land to any citizen, or an immigrant intending to become a citizen, in return for a small filing fee. To gain final title on the land, the claimant had either to build a house on the land, plant crops and remain living there for five years continuously; or they could buy the land for $1.25 per acre after living on it for six months, so long as they had built a house and planted crops in that time. Between the signing of the Act in 1862 and 1900, more than 80 million acres was distributed to people moving west and building their houses on the prairies of the American West. Among them were the Ingalls family, who moved to Montgomery County, Kansas, in 1869. *Little House On The Prairie* was based on the family's experiences there.

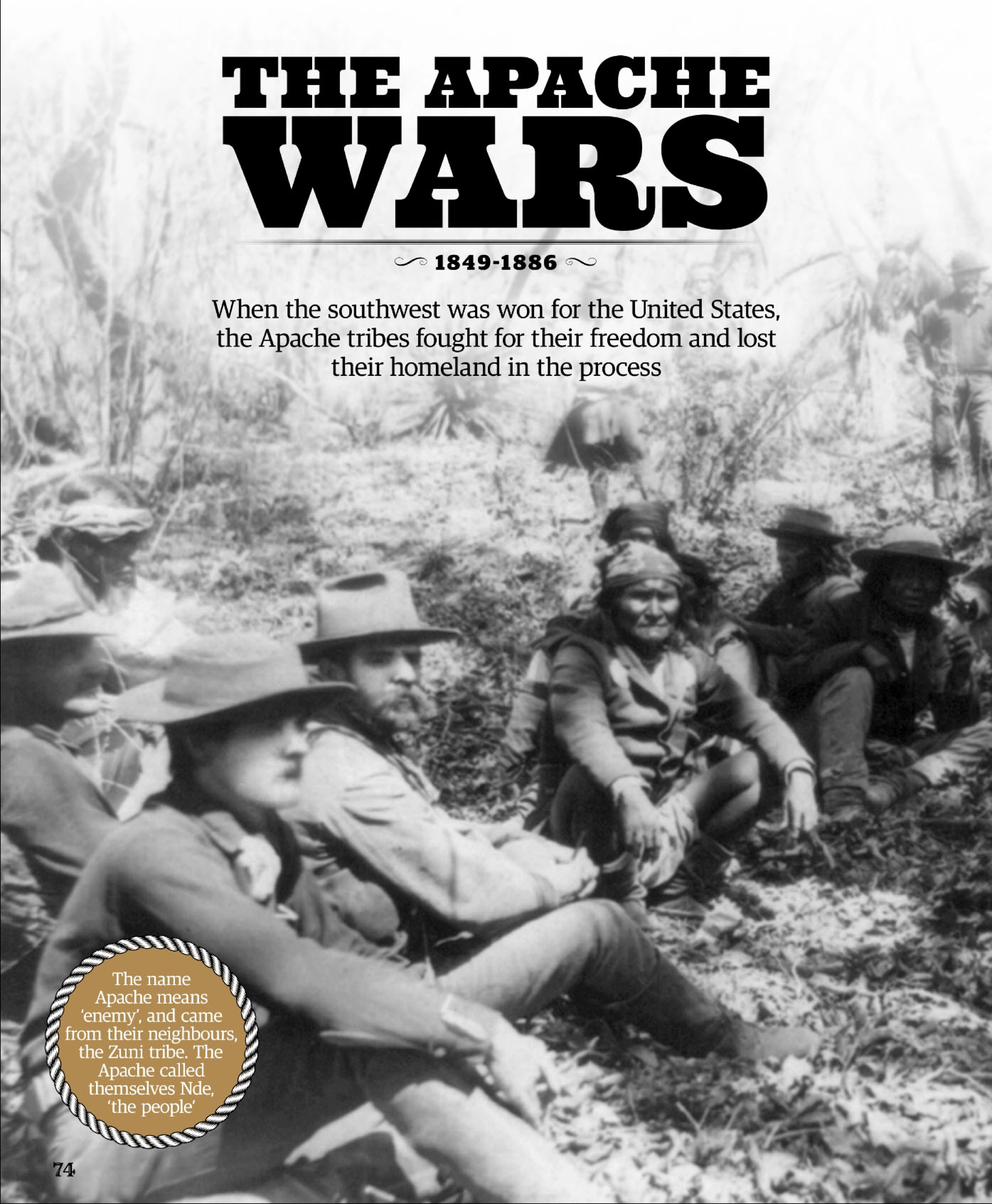

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE
LAURA INGALLS WILDER

The cover of the first edition of *Little House On The Prairie*




J. L. Magee del.
KANSAS
SOUTHERN CHIVALRY — ARGUMENT versus CLUB'S.

Congressman Preston Brooks attacking Senator Charles Sumner



THE APACHE WARS

1849-1886

When the southwest was won for the United States, the Apache tribes fought for their freedom and lost their homeland in the process

The name Apache means 'enemy', and came from their neighbours, the Zuni tribe. The Apache called themselves Nde, 'the people'

As the United States expanded westwards through the 19th century, its settlers fought, displaced and destroyed the native tribes who lived in their path. Often, the settlers dragged the government in Washington DC and the US Army in their wake. Washington's authority did not reach the frontier territories, in law or by force. The forts, treaties and battles that mark the Natives' defeat in the West arose from improvisations, and often in response to public opinion 'back East'. The series of conflicts that became known as the Apache Wars, however, began with a decision in Washington DC and a war with a foreign government.

In March 1845, President James Polk annexed the independent Republic of Texas to the United States. The endless tide of settlers was pushing the United States' borders west, south and north; Polk was also negotiating the border of Oregon with British-ruled Canada. To fix Texas' southern border, and to open Mexican-ruled Alta California to further American settlement, Polk offered to buy from Mexico the territories along the Rio Grande and Nueces River.

The Mexican government had not recognised the revolt of the Texans in 1836, or the American annexation of 1845. It rejected Polk's offer. So in July 1845, Polk sent Major-General Zachary Taylor and 3,500 troops to the Nueces River. Though Polk insisted that the United States had no territorial designs on Alta California, he instructed Taylor to provoke the Mexican Army. In April 1846, Mexico declared war – and lost more territory. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), the United States' southern border was fixed on the Rio Grande. Mexico ceded the territories which became the states of California, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, as well as parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming. In return, Polk's administration paid Mexico $15 million – less than half Polk's initial offer.

One outcome of the Mexican-American War was increased conflict over slavery, for America's already divided political parties disagreed over whether the 'peculiar institution' should be extended to the new territories. Another was to bring the Apache tribes of the southwest under American rule. The Apache tribes' nomadic lifestyle and warlike culture had already brought them into conflict with the Mexican government. Now, the increased presence of American settler and soldiers led to a series of wars, and the destruction of traditional Apache life.

The Jicarilla Apaches had given the American soldiers safe passage through Apacheria, but the discovery of gold in the Santa Rita Mountains of Arizona, and a sudden influx of gold miners, soon

Geronimo held council with General Crook in 1886 before going on to surrender. Everything that was promised to Geronimo and his people was never delivered led to conflict. Only months after the Treaty of Hidalgo Guadalupe, a mixed band of Jicarilla and Ute warriors massacred a wagon train. A few months later, a group of mail carriers met a similar fate.

In the 1853, the 1st Cavalry Regiment moved against the Jicarilla. On 30 March, after a series of skirmishes and armed pursuits of cattle raiders, some 250 Apaches and Utes ambushed a 60-man cavalry unit at Cieneguilla, a 'little stream' near Taos, New Mexico. In a long and fierce day of fighting, a third of the cavalrymen were killed, and almost all the remainder wounded. The rest of the regiment pursued the Jicarilla into the snow-bound mountains. Many died of exposure, and many more when the cavalry caught upon with them in a high canyon.

Cochise's son Naiche (c.1857-1919) fought with Geronimo and was the final hereditary chief of the Chiricahua Apaches

A gold rush also preceded war with the Chiricahuan Apaches of the central Rio Grande region. In 1851, a group of miners tied the Chiricahua chief Mangas Coloradas to a tree and beat him. Over the following decade, the Apaches raided settlers' cattle, and the settlers retaliated with raids on Apache camps. Finally, in early 1861, an Apache party kidnapped a rancher's son. An Army lieutenant named George Bascom tried to negotiate with Mangas Coloradas' son-in-law Cochise for the hostage's release – and sparked a war by taking and then hanging Apache hostages of his own.

On the outbreak of the American Civil War, Mangas Coloradas and Cochise launched a campaign to expel all Americans and Mexicans from their territory. Instead, the Chiricahuan Apaches were caught between the pro-Confederate Arizonans and a pro-Union column from California that entered Arizona in late 1862. When the Union militia and Chiricahuan warriors clashed, Mangas Coloradas was shot in the chest.

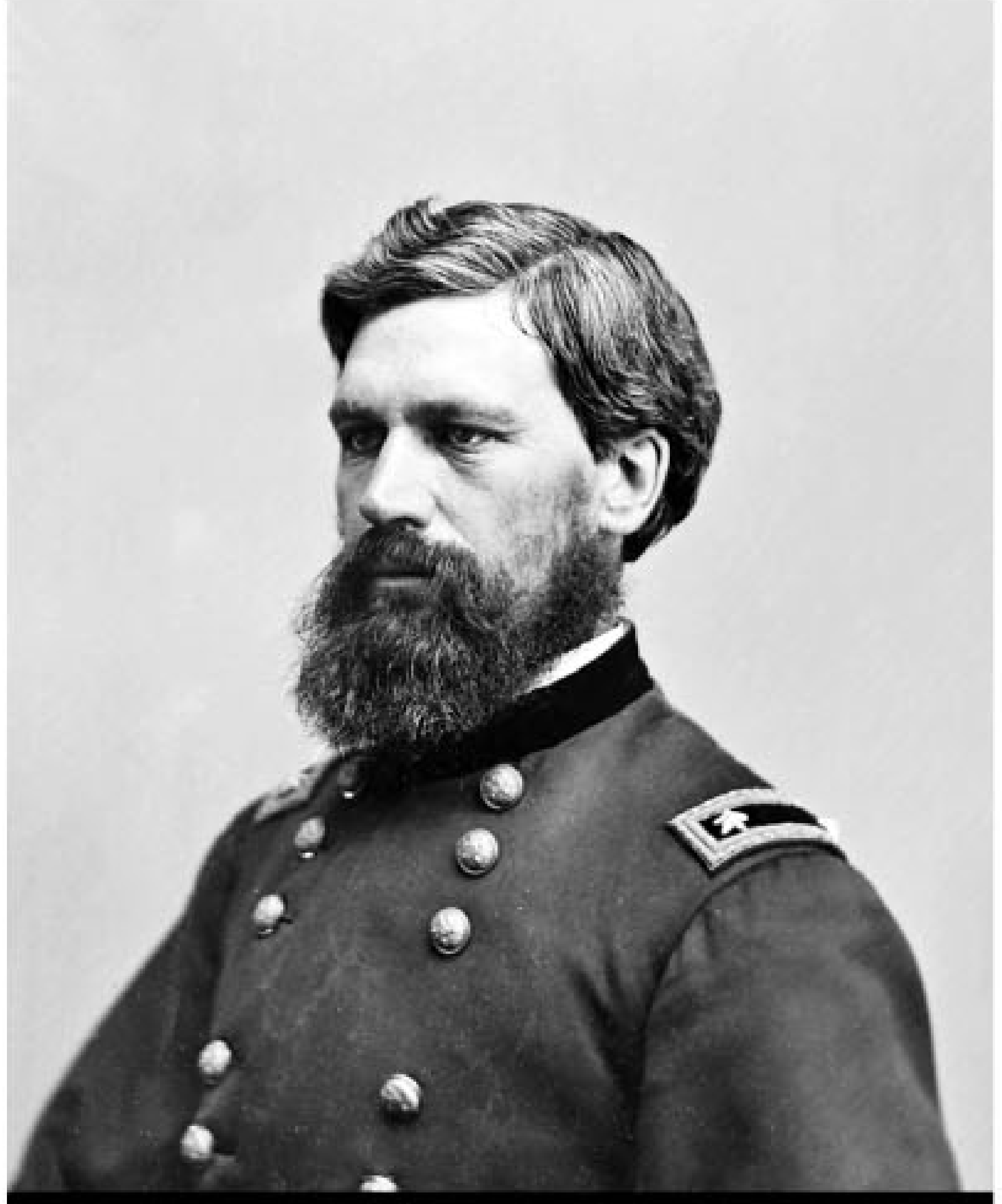
In January 1863, Mangas Coloradas went to Fort McLane in southwestern New Mexico under a white flag, to negotiate his surrender. His American interlocutor, Brigadier-General Joseph Rodman West, had him tortured, and then shot. Soldiers decapitated his body, boiled the skin from his skull, and sent it to the Smithsonian Museum. West later became a senator. Cochise took to the Dragoon Mountains, to wage a guerrilla war of attrition. The US Army retaliated with atrocities of its own.

The Arizona Territory was sparsely settled, and the Army's forts were islands in an arid and often baking semi-desert. Horses died from the heat, and wagons disintegrated on the stony tracks. The Apache were better armed than the Plains Indians, and also more cunning and cruel. One Army captain recalled that the Apache warrior preferred "to skulk like a coyote for hours" before killing his enemy, rather than attack directly and risk a wound. This made him, the captain admitted, "an exceptionally skilful soldier". The Apache tortured their prisoners with the same elaboration and care. This terrified the settlers, and encouraged them to commit atrocities of their own.

The Civil War delayed the imposition of federal reservations on the Apache. But after 1865, the Army concentrated more resources against Cochise, harrying his people until only a few hundred of them still survived. By August 1870, Cochise, who was dying from stomach cancer, felt that the Apache and the Americans were "about even". In negotiations with Brigadier-General Oliver Howard. Cochise secured a 50-mile-wide reservation for him and his band. In 1872, Cochise came down and surrendered.

Unlike the Plains Indians, the Apaches did not live in teepees of animal hide. They lived in wickiups, wooden frames covered with brush

Meanwhile, Howard's fellow officer, Civil War veteran Lieutenant-Colonel George C Crook, was to wage war on the remaining Apache tribes in the region, to force them onto the newly created White Mountain Reservation, in what is now the middle of the San Carlos Reservation. In December 1872, Crook's aide William H Brown led a night attack on a Yavapai encampment. When women and children fled into a cave, Brown ordered his men to fire at the cave roof, so that the ricochets would kill the unarmed fugitives. The Army massacre dignified this massacre as the 'Battle of Salt River Canyon'.



Brigadier-General Oliver Otis Howard, the Civil War veteran and committed Christian who tried to negotiate with Cochise

Lieutenant-Colonel George C Crook, who pursued Cochise and the Apache with unremitting violence, and forced them onto reservations

Timeline

1848

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
After the American victory in the Mexican-American War, Mexico loses the territories which become modern California, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah. Overnight, the Apache are subject to American law.

1851

Beating of Mangas Coloradas
Following the discovery of gold on the Rio Grande, a group of miners tie Mangas Coloradas to a tree and beat him. After a decade of intensifying violence, the US Army intervenes.

1853

Ambush during the Jicarilla War
In March 1853, 250 Apaches and Utes ambush a 60-man cavalry unit at Cieneguilla, a 'little stream' near Taos, New Mexico. A third of the cavalrymen are killed, and almost all the remainder wounded.

1861

The Bascom Incident
When Coyotero Apaches kidnap a rancher's son, Army lieutenant George Bascom forces Cochise into an 11-year-long war against the United States of America.

1863

The murder of Mangas Coloradas
When Mangas Coloradas goes to Fort McLane under a white flag to negotiate his surrender, his American interlocutor, Brigadier-General Joseph Rodman West, has him tortured and shot.

Joseph Rodman West, who allegedly ordered the murder of Mangas Coloradas, as a US senator

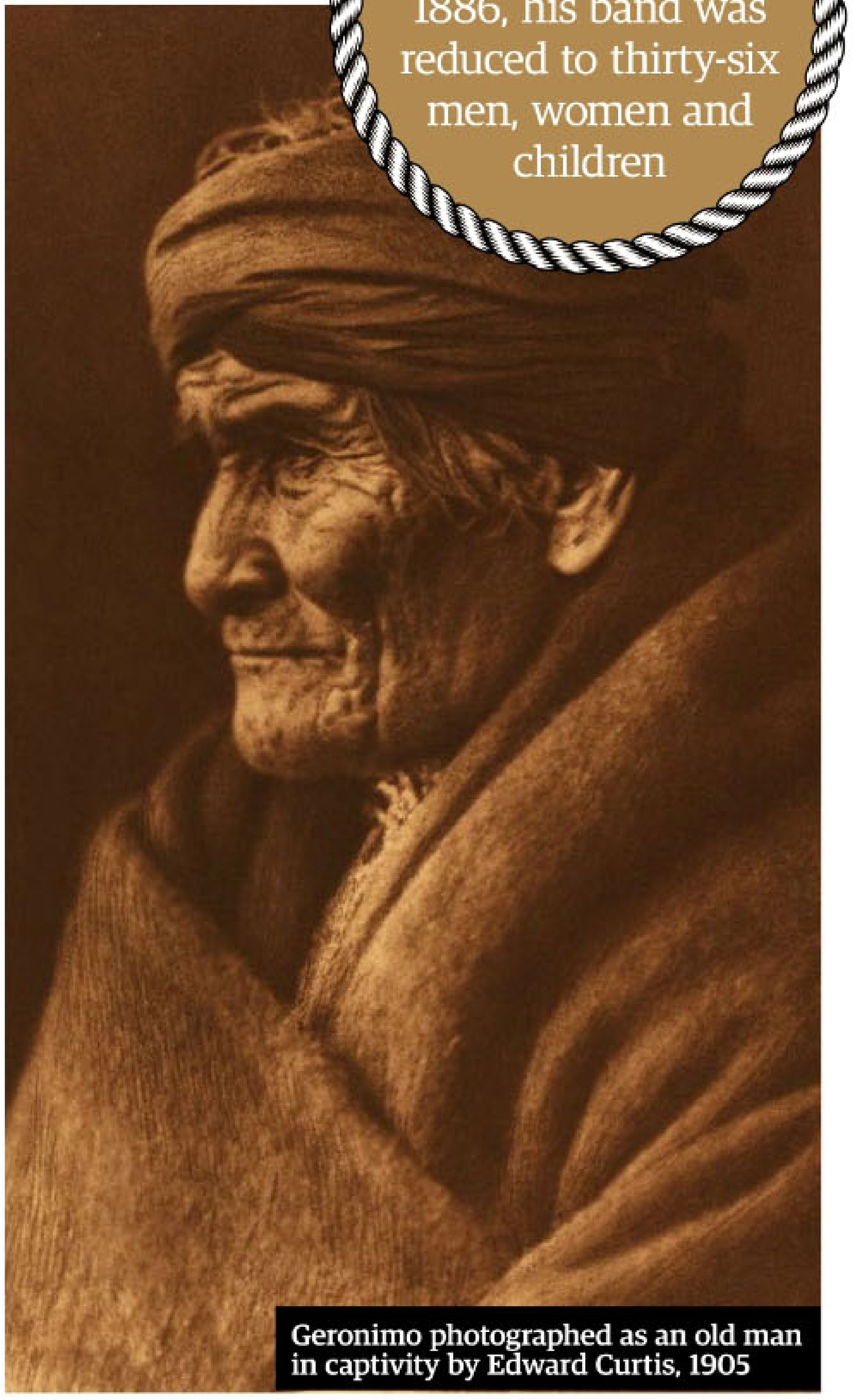
Crook's campaign continued for another year, but failed to capture Cochise. When his band resumed its ancient tradition of raiding, Crook went after him. But Cochise died of cancer in 1874. To secure his tribe's safety, he had appointed his son, Taza. But the US government's Bureau of Indian Affairs denied the Chiricahua their promised reservation by Dragoon Mountain. Instead, most of Cochise's band followed Taza onto a reservation at San Carlos, a place that one Apache called, "a good place for the Apaches – a good place for them to die."

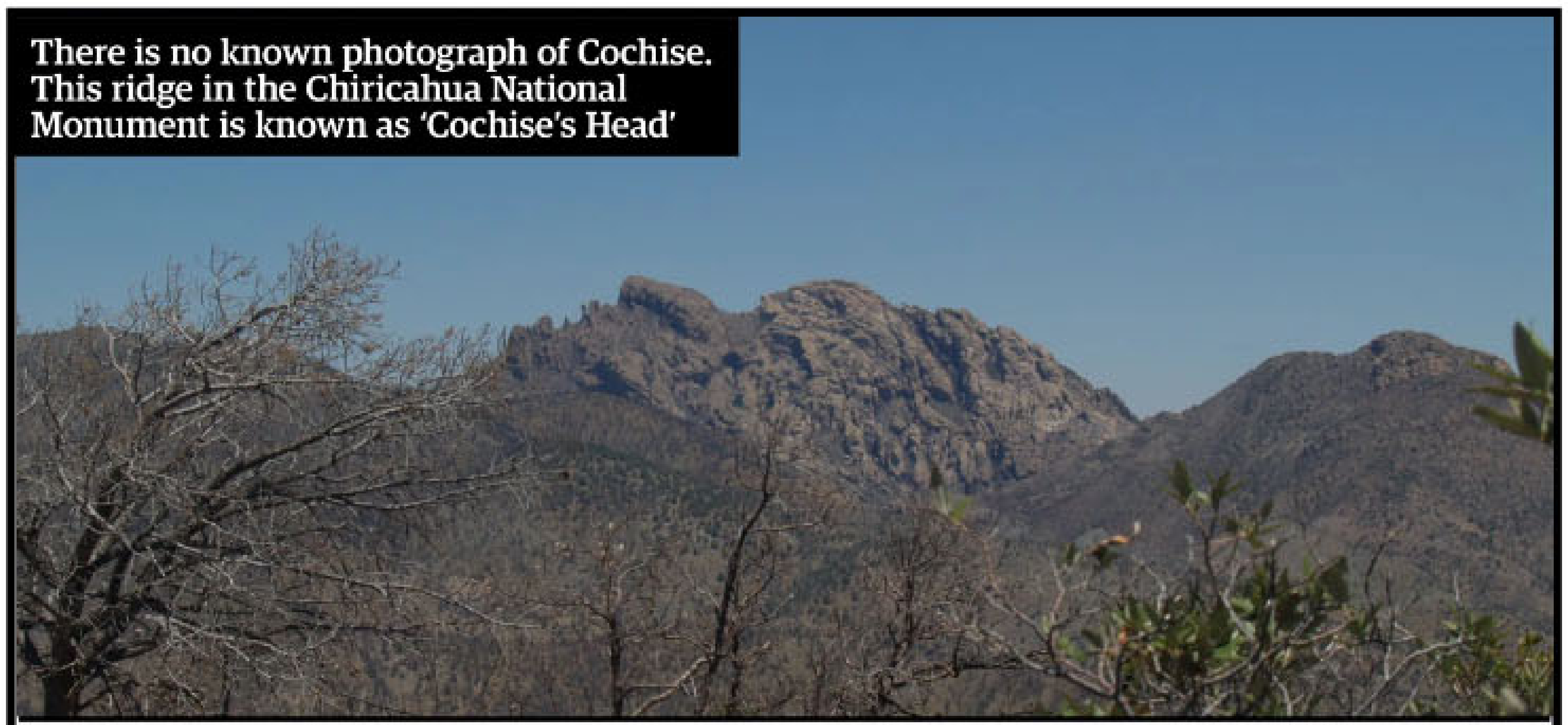
Many Chiricahua continued to resist the farmers and ranchers who had taken over their lands. About half escaped to Mexico with the famous and elusive shaman of the Bedonkohe band, Geronimo. Lieutenant Britton Davis, who spent years in pursuit of Geronimo, called him a "depraved rascal… thoroughly vicious, intractable and treacherous". Even Chato, one of the Chokonen leaders in the 1880s, admitted that Geronimo was "not a great man at all". He did not lack, however, for what Britton Davis begrudgingly called "courage and determination."

Captured and brought to San Carlos in 1877, Geronimo and a band of 700 'holdouts' escaped in September 1881. Two years later, George Crook, now in charge of the Arizona and New Mexico reservations, persuaded him to return. After a year at San Carlos, Geronimo absconded again, raiding south and into Mexico. He surrendered for the last time in 1886, to his adversary Crook in the Sierra Madre Mountains. Taken to Florida as a prisoner of war, he never returned to Arizona.

Geronimo died a prisoner in Oklahoma in 1909, just before the last embers of Apache resistance flared out. In 1924, the last Apache cattle raid in the US resulted in criminal convictions, not a punitive expedition by the Army. In 1933, the last 'holdouts' in Mexico surrendered. The Apache Wars were over.

> When Geronimo finally surrendered in 1886, his band was reduced to thirty-six men, women and children


Geronimo photographed as an old man in captivity by Edward Curtis, 1905


There is no known photograph of Cochise. This ridge in the Chiricahua National Monument is known as 'Cochise's Head'

Cochise

The undefeated chief

Cochise, whose name means 'oak-like' in Apache, was the chief of the Chokonen or 'central' Chiricahua during the Apache Wars. Born around 1805, Cochise grew up where modern Arizona and New Mexico meet the Sonora region of northern Mexico. In his youth, he fought with the Chokonen bands who successfully defeated the efforts of the Mexican army to stop Apache raids.

A strong and tall fighter who lived up to his name, Cochise was not involved in the 1861 Coyotero Apache raid which, through the kidnapping of a rancher's son, brought the Chokonen into conflict with the US Army. But Cochise was accused of the kidnap by Lieutenant George Bascom, and had to fight his way out of Bascom's camp.

That fight, and the taking and execution of hostages by both Bascom and Cochise, led to eleven years of war between Cochise and the US Army. An expert guerrilla leader, Cochise evaded capture even as the Army reduced his band and forced them into the Dragoon Mountains. In the end, cancer and exhaustion defeated him. In 1872, Cochise secured a small reservation for his people. When he died there in 1874, the Bureau of Indian Affairs forced his people off that reservation, and into the inferior and inhospitable San Carlos Reservation.

1872

Battle of Salt River Canyon
William H Brown leads a night attack on a Yavapai encampment. Brown orders his men to fire on women and children who have fled into a cave.

1874

The death of Cochise
Two years after negotiating his retirement to a reservation, Cochise succumbs to stomach cancer. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will not honour its side of the deal.

1881

Geronimo and the hold-outs
Four years after his capture, Geronimo leads a band of 700 'holdouts' in an escape from the reservation at San Carlos. For the next five years, he will raid in Mexico and the southern United States.

1886

Geronimo's last stand
Pursued across New Mexico after a second break-out, Geronimo surrenders. The once mighty Apache war bands are reduced to a party of 36 women and children included.

A traditional Apache wickiup, photographed by Edward Curtis in 1903

A Jicarilla man, photographed in 1904 by the pioneer photographer Edward Curtis

1924

The last Apache raid
A group of young Apache men steal cattle from a ranch near their reservation. This is the last recorded incident of an Apache cattle raid.

© Alamy, Wiki, Clay Gilliland, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

GERONIMO

Geronimo was many things – a warrior, a thief, a killer and a leader. But it was what he wasn't – a husband and a father – that mattered most

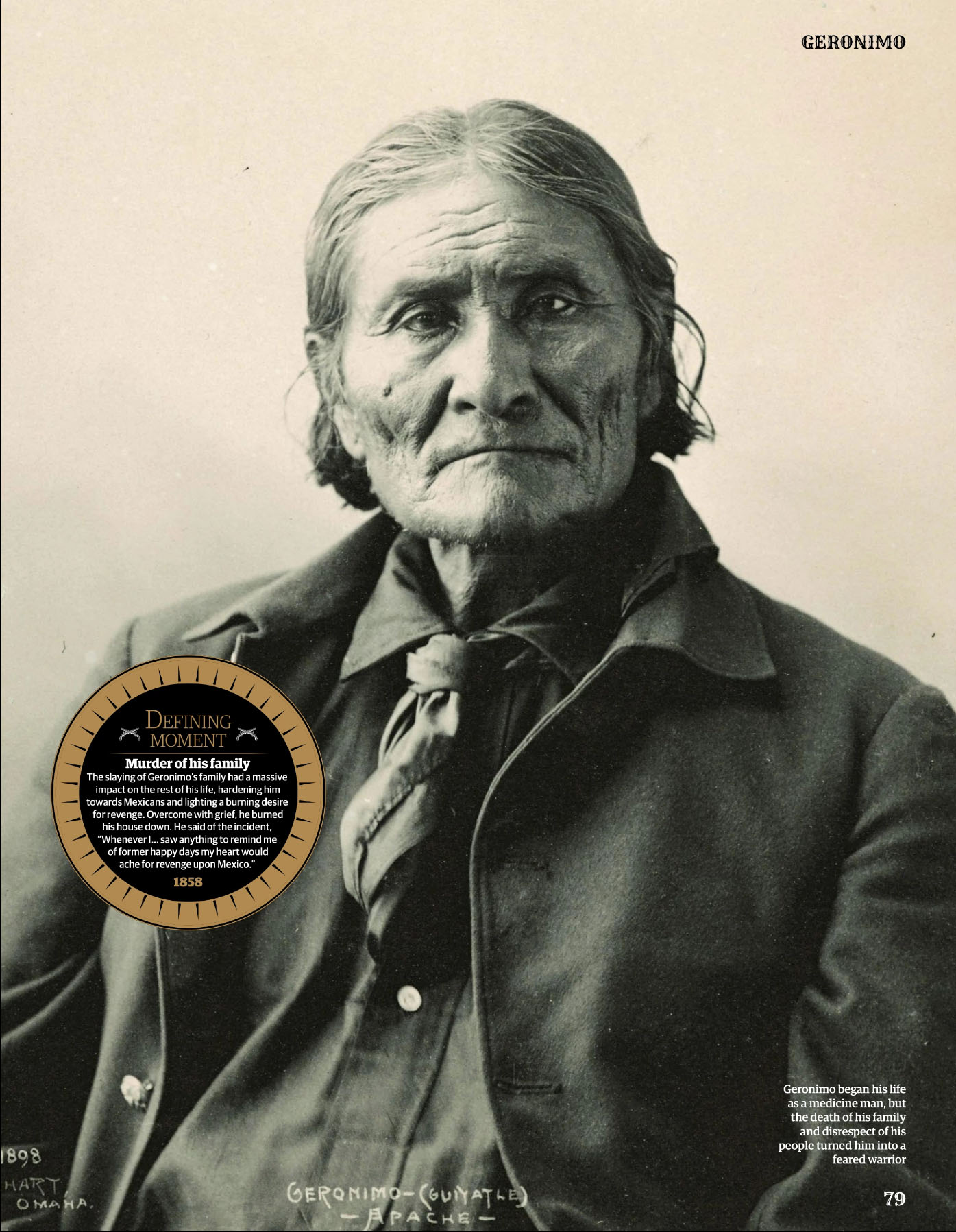
Geronimo's family was dead. His mother, his wife and his three young children, all slain by a band of Mexican soldiers. The profound, all-encompassing sense of loss caused something to rise up in Geronimo: a primal desire to avenge his loved ones that led to decades of fighting against Mexican and US soldiers, earning him the title 'the worst Indian who ever lived' among the white settlers.

Born 16 June, 1829, Geronimo's given name was Goyaałé, 'the one who yawns'. He belonged to the Bedonkohe band of the Chiricahua Apache tribe. Raised according to Apache tradition, his parents educated him in the legends of his people, of their beliefs and also of the adventures of warriors fighting for their honour. His was a life at one with the landscape around him, hunting when the tribe needed to eat or attending to the crops in the field.

After his admission to the council of the warriors when he was 17, he was free to marry the love of his life – Alope. They set up home near his mother's tepee, and like any couple with their first home, set about decorating it. Before long Geronimo was a father of three. His children lived the same idyllic childhood as he did, and he was very happy. Then in 1858, his tribe stopped in a Mexican town called Kas-ki-yeh (Janos) and his life changed forever.

While he was out trading, a band of Mexican soldiers slaughtered everyone in the camp.

Geronimo had a strange respect for President Roosevelt but still had the courage to address the prisoner of war situation with him



DEFINING MOMENT

Murder of his family

The slaying of Geronimo's family had a massive impact on the rest of his life, hardening him towards Mexicans and lighting a burning desire for revenge. Overcome with grief, he burned his house down. He said of the incident, "Whenever I… saw anything to remind me of former happy days my heart would ache for revenge upon Mexico."

1858

Geronimo began his life as a medicine man, but the death of his family and disrespect of his people turned him into a feared warrior

Geronimo lost his mother, wife and children. Their chief, Mangus Coloradas, decided there were just too few of them left to stay and avenge the slain, so they gathered the supplies they could, left their dead at the camp and headed back home to Arizona.

Still reeling from what had happened, Geronimo was tasked with soliciting help from the Chiricahua and Nedni Apaches, which he managed to do. Almost a year on from the Kas-ki-yeh massacre, Geronimo stood with warriors from the three Apache tribes, ready to go on the war path. They had no horses and wore only moccasins and a loin cloth. The cloth would also double as a sleeping blanket and meant the warriors didn't have to carry much. Covering 40-45 miles a day, it was imperative that they travelled light.

Geronimo guided the warriors into Mexico, and it was near Arise that a small group of men came to parley with them. But Geronimo wasn't interested in words. The men were captured, killed and scalped in an attempt to draw troops from the city. The move worked, and the next day two companies of cavalry and two of infantry rode out towards them. Geronimo spotted the soldiers who had massacred his family and tribe. He relayed this to the chieftains, who told him to direct the battle.

This was Geronimo's chance to not only please the chieftain but get revenge on those who had wronged him. He arranged the warriors in a circle near the river. The Mexican infantry formed two lines, with the cavalry in reserve. The infantry advanced until they were about 400 yards away from Geronimo and the other warriors. They stopped and then opened fire.

Geronimo led a charge towards them, while other troops attacked from the rear. His vow for vengeance was all he thought about and he fought like a wounded animal.

The battle raged for almost two hours, after which only Geronimo and three others were left. They had used all their arrows and spears, so fought with their hands and knives. Two armed soldiers appeared and shot two of Geronimo's men. The other was attacked with a sabre. Geronimo grabbed a spear from a body and killed one trooper. The other soldier advanced. The two fought, but Geronimo's lust for blood was stronger and he killed the Mexican with his knife. It was over. Apaches from across the field shouted out their war cry and Geronimo had avenged his family.

But it wasn't enough. Geronimo wanted more revenge and persuaded two other warriors, Ah-koch-ne and Ko-deh-ne to join him in invading Mexico. They set out on foot, following the Sierra de Antunez Mountains. Upon finding a village they decided to attack it. While advancing, Geronimo's two companions were shot dead. Mexicans descended on Geronimo, who fought them off before hiding.

The next two days were spent dodging the Mexicans while trying to get back to his camp in Arizona. He arrived, but with nothing to show for his journey apart from two dead warriors, Geronimo was not popular. He didn't care – his need for revenge topped everything else. As he said, "I never ceased to plan for their [the Mexicans'] punishment."

The following years were spent in much the same pattern – Geronimo would persuade some of his tribe to go raiding with him in Mexico, chaos would ensue, Geronimo would kill Mexicans, and if everything went to plan, they would return with supplies. But then the enemy changed. White settlers and US soldiers started flooding the area, with their eye on moving the Apaches to reservations and taking their land.

In 1863, Geronimo's chief, Mangus Coloradas set out to make a peace treaty with US soldiers at Apache Tejo, New Mexico. He was told that if he brought his tribe to live near the settlement there he would be given food, blankets and other supplies. After holding council, it was decided Mangus Coloradas would take half the tribe there, and if all went well, Geronimo would follow with the rest.

It did not go well. Geronimo got reports of the tribe being killed. With no firepower and fearful the troops would come for them, he took his tribe into the mountains. A few attacks came from US troops, with Geronimo and his tribe having to continually move in an effort to find supplies. After initially making a treaty with General Howard at Apache Pass (Fort Bowie), Geronimo, along with other leaders, decided to leave.

While at Hot Springs, two scouts from San Carlos approached with a message asking Geronimo to come to town. Immediately on arrival, Geronimo was disarmed and sentenced to the guardhouse. The reason? He had left Apache Pass, even though he had never been told he couldn't leave. Geronimo was held for a couple of years, then in 1883, a rumour started that the officers were planning to imprison the leaders. Geronimo couldn't stand the thought of being in jail, so he fled.

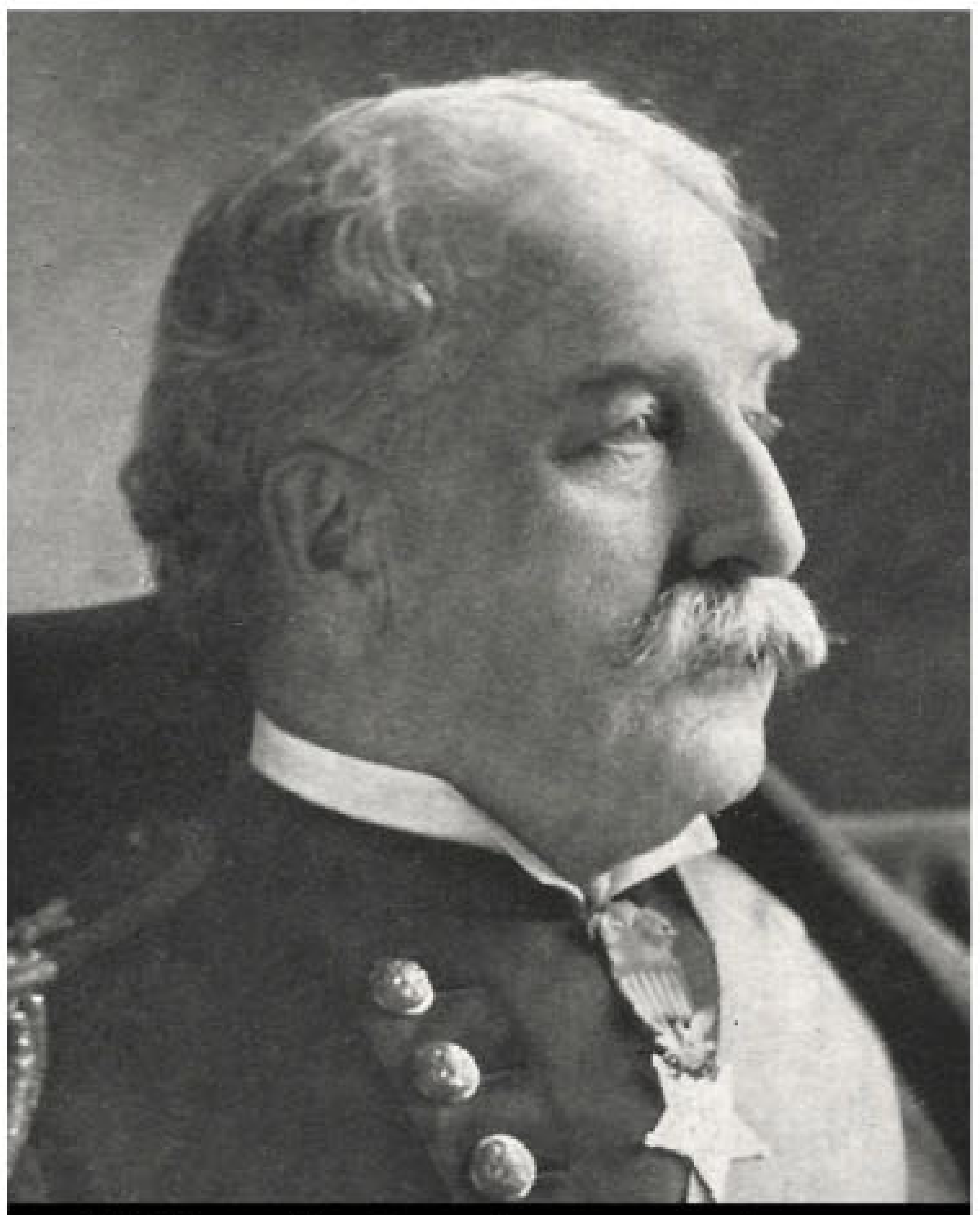
Geronimo moved around for about a year in the mountains of Old Mexico, returning to San Carlos and taking a herd of cattle and horses. The officer in

DEFINING MOMENT

Getting the Geronimo name

There is some dispute about how Geronimo got his name, but both working accounts took place later in his life. Sent out by his chief to exact revenge on the Mexicans, Geronimo set about them like a man possessed. One story has it that the Mexicans cried out to Saint Jerome (Jeronimo) to help them. Others say it was simply a mispronounciation.

circa 1859



In his biography, Geronimo asserts that General Miles lied to him about what life he could expect after he surrendered

Geronimo: Five facts

1 In his final campaign, 5,000 soldiers and 500 scouts were sent to track and capture Geronimo's small band of warriors.

2 Legend has it that as a boy, Geronimo swallowed the heart of his first kill to guarantee success of the chase in later life.

3 Geronimo joined the Dutch Reformed Church in 1903 but was expelled four years later because of his gambling.

4 Photographer C S Fly's photos of Geronimo and other free Apaches (including two of Geronimo's sons) are the only existing photographs of Geronimo's surrender to the US.

5 Geronimo's skull was allegedly stolen from its tomb by members of Yale's Skull and Bones Society.

Timeline

1846

Joins warrior council
It wasn't until he joined the warrior council that Geronimo could marry Alope and fight as a warrior for his tribe.

1858

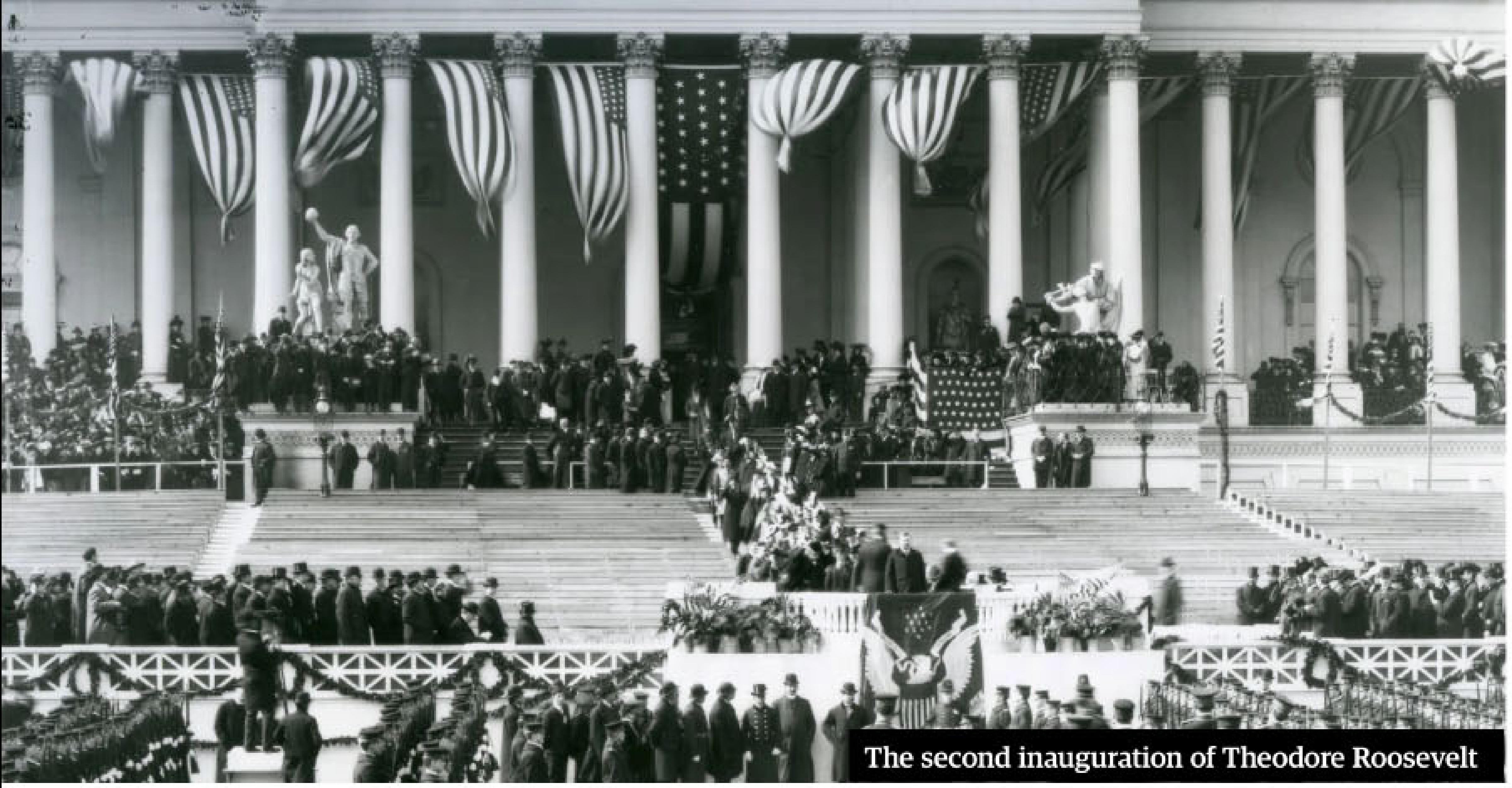
Kas-ki-yeh massacre
While the men were out trading in the Mexican town of Kas-ki-yeh (Janos) a band of Mexican soldiers raided the camp of women and children. Geronimo's mother wife, and children were all killed.

1860

Miner attack
Bedonkohe Apaches camping on the west bank of the Mimbres River (New Mexico) are attacked by 30 miners, who kill four of the tribespeople. The Apaches respond with raids on US citizens.

1873

Massacre at Casa Grande
The Apaches and Mexicans agree on a peace treaty, but the Mexicans give mescal to the Apache and as soon as they become intoxicated, they kill 20 and capture some more.



The second inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt

charge of San Carlos, General Crook, took the cattle and horses away from Geronimo. He instructed his officers to arrest Geronimo, and if he fought back, to kill him.

Geronimo, along with about 400 other Native Americans, left for Old Mexico before eventually ending up at the Sierra de Antunez Mountains. Geronimo heard that General Crook wanted to see him, so he agreed to go with him back to San Carlos. While he and his tribe were returning to the US, Geronimo and his people started to have misgivings about the venture, causing them to turn around and head the other way.

This decision did not go down well. It was the third time Geronimo had cheated capture and his constant raids and fights against the US troops were embarrassing. By staying one step ahead of his enemy, Geronimo forced the Americans to constantly chase him. With the Mexicans also becoming more active, conflict broke out pretty much every day.

It was decided that the tribe should break up into small bands and disperse. While on their way to Arizona in 1886, Geronimo heard from scouts that General Miles wanted to meet him again. Geronimo acquiesced to the request, agreeing to meet Miles. He even promised to surrender on the condition that he wouldn't be arrested. He was assured by his soon-to-be host that he wouldn't be, a lie that Geronimo would regret believing.

After arriving in San Antonio, Texas, Geronimo was immediately tried for his crimes. He was then moved to Fort Pickens, where he was made to endure hard labour for nearly two years. He was then sent to Alabama, where for five years he worked for the government. The land, property and freedom promised by General Miles in the surrender treaty never materialised.

Geronimo acquired a celebrity status during his time as prisoner of war. In 1898, he took part in a Chiricahua delegation from Fort Sill to the Omaha Exposition in Nebraska, which led to him becoming an in demand figure for other fêtes, including the 1904 St Louis World's Fair.

Despite his misgivings, Geronimo agreed to attend the fair, and he ended up staying for six months, selling his photograph and autographs, all the while still being held as a prisoner of war. In fact, despite being assured by General Miles that he wouldn't ever become a prisoner, Geronimo spent more than 20 years as exactly that. When he died from pneumonia at the age of 79 in February 1909, he did so as a prisoner of war.

On his deathbed, Geronimo expressed his deep regret at having surrendered, telling his nephew that "I should never have surrendered. I should have fought until I was the last man alive." A man of his word, Geronimo died in the custody of a liar.

DEFINING MOMENT

Meeting President Roosevelt

Geronimo took part in President Roosevelt's second inaugural parade, riding a pony down Pennsylvania Avenue. After the parade he addressed the president at the White House about allowing the Chiricahuas to return to their homeland. He pleaded with him to "cut the ropes and make me free". His request was denied.

4 March 1905

The 'volunteer' POWs

Chiricahua Apache men, women and children surrendered to the United States Army on the understanding that, after being held as prisoners of war for two years, they would be allowed to return to their own land. This was in 1886. The agreed two years imprisonment ended up lasting an incredible 27 years, with the Apaches held against their will with no charges made against them and no chance to make their case in court.

The treatment of the Apaches in these prisons was disgraceful. After the first 75 prisoners arrived at Fort Marion, Florida, the commander said there was only room for 75 more. Yet in total, 502 Apaches were sent. Then it was deemed a good idea to take some of the men and boys to an island, where they were expected to catch and cook fish to feed the others. To the Apache, eating fish was a taboo, yet it continued to be one of their main food sources.

After spending eight years at Fort Marion, Congress passed a provision to move the Chiricahua Apache to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, which was in Indian territory. Still prisoners, General Nelson Miles visited them to explain that this was now their permanent home.

The United States Senate attempted to free the Chiricahua Apache from their prisoner status and provide allotments at Fort Sill, but this was defeated in the House. The prisoners had to wait until 1913 before their freedom was returned.

Apache chief Geronimo (right) and his warriors in 1886

1883

Mexicans work with US
US troops are allowed into Mexico in order to hunt down Geronimo and his small band of Apaches.

1885

Escape from reservation
Geronimo, along with other Apache, flees the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona. The reservation tried to install a restrictive life on the semi-nomads.

1886

Surrender to General Miles
After years of battles and being hunted, Geronimo and his small band of warriors surrender to General Miles on 6 September.

1894

Relocation to Fort Sill
After his surrender, Geronimo is moved around from forts to barracks before finally being sent to Fort Sill, where he would die.

1898

Omaha Exposition
As part of a Chiricahua delegation, Geronimo finds himself a major attraction and reaches a celebrity status that stays with him.

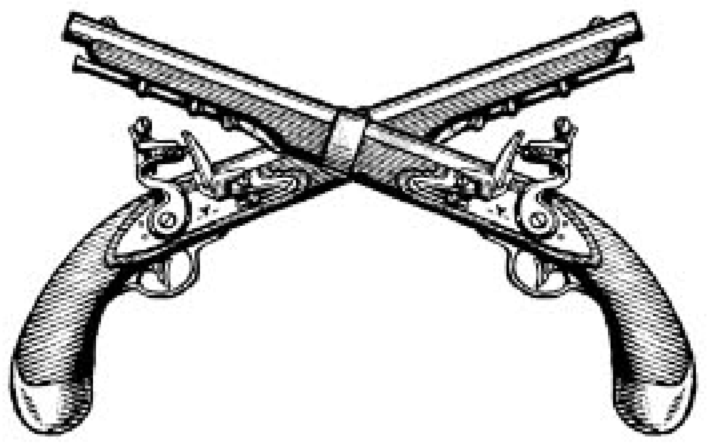
1905

Geronimo tells his story
After getting President Roosevelt's permission, S M Barrett publishes *Geronimo, Story Of My Life*. Geronimo apparently refused to answer questions and instead set out a narrative of his life.

1909

Dies of pneumonia
After being thrown from a horse and spending all night in the cold, Geronimo is found by a friend in a terrible state. He later dies of pneumonia, still a prisoner of the US.

© Alamy, Thinkstock



WILD BILL HICKOK

With his tall frame, steely eyes, sharp shootin', hard drinkin', gamblin' ways, 'Wild Bill' Hickok became an iconic hero in the Old West

Out of all the colourful characters from the Wild West, Wild Bill Hickok is definitely up there as one of the most vibrant. In his time he was a wagon master, soldier, spy, sheriff, marshal, gambler and showman. National press and magazines scrambled to record his exploits, building him into a folk hero. Calamity Jane boasted that the two were lovers and then married, although there is much dispute about this. Even his death has turned into a gambling legacy that exists to this day.

While there has undoubtedly been a lot of exaggeration about his adventures - from himself as well as others - even if you strip away all of the razzle dazzle, an incredibly interesting figure remains.

Born James Butler Hickok on 27 May, 1837, he was exposed at a young age to the idea of helping the underdog. His parents had a farm but also risked their lives operating a station along the Underground Railway helping to smuggle slaves out of the South. The important work carried out by his parents instilled a sense of right and wrong in the young boy, and he would often rush to help the unfortunate during his life.

His childhood was also when he discovered his love of guns. While out with his father, they were chased by officers who suspected they were smuggling slaves in their hay wagon. A gunfight ensued, and rather than being frightened, Hickok was enthralled. After this incident, he would spend his time taking target practice at the unfortunate wildlife around the farm and soon became a very accurate shot.

Hickok left to become a teamster for the Union Army after Civil War broke out in 1861. That year also heralded an incident that would play a large part in the legend of Wild Bill - the McCanles Massacre, which took place in July.

While visiting a friend at Rock Creek Station, Bill was told of a gang of Confederates led by David McCanles that had been demanding payment for the buildings they had sold them. No sooner had he

DEFINING MOMENT

Hickok flees home

At 18, Hickok gets into a fight with Charles Hudson. During the fight they both fall into a canal, and both think they have killed the other. Hickok panics and flees Illinois for Leavenworth. He joins Jim Lane's Free State Army, meets a 12-year-old Buffalo Bill and begins his life of adventure.

1855

Wild Bill Hickok cut a dashing figure in the Wild West, with men in awe of his gun skills and women in awe of his looks been told this, the gang descended upon them. A shootout ensued, with Hickok shooting McCanles before he got the chance to shoot him, then going on to shoot another five gang members, knocking out another member, then fighting off another three in hand-to-hand combat. At least this was the account that appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in February 1867. The public loved it.

By this time they were used to the tales of Wild Bill and his adventures, so they lapped up every detail. It is more likely that Hickok only killed one man, with as many as three others helping to dispatch the rest, but the truth never gets in the way of a good story.

Hickok was discharged from the army in 1862 for unknown reasons. His whereabouts become a bit sketchy for the next year, but at least one source suggests he was a Union spy. After some time as a detective and a scout, Hickok arrived in Springfield, where he got his first taste of fame.

21 July, 1865, saw Hickok involved in a duel with Davis Tutt, who he shot dead. There is some discussion over whether the duel came as a result of a fight over a card game, a woman, or even because Tutt stole a watch from Hickok and then flounced around town with it, despite Hickok warning him that he would kill him if he wore it. Whatever the reason, the quick-draw duel was the first of its kind and attracted much attention.

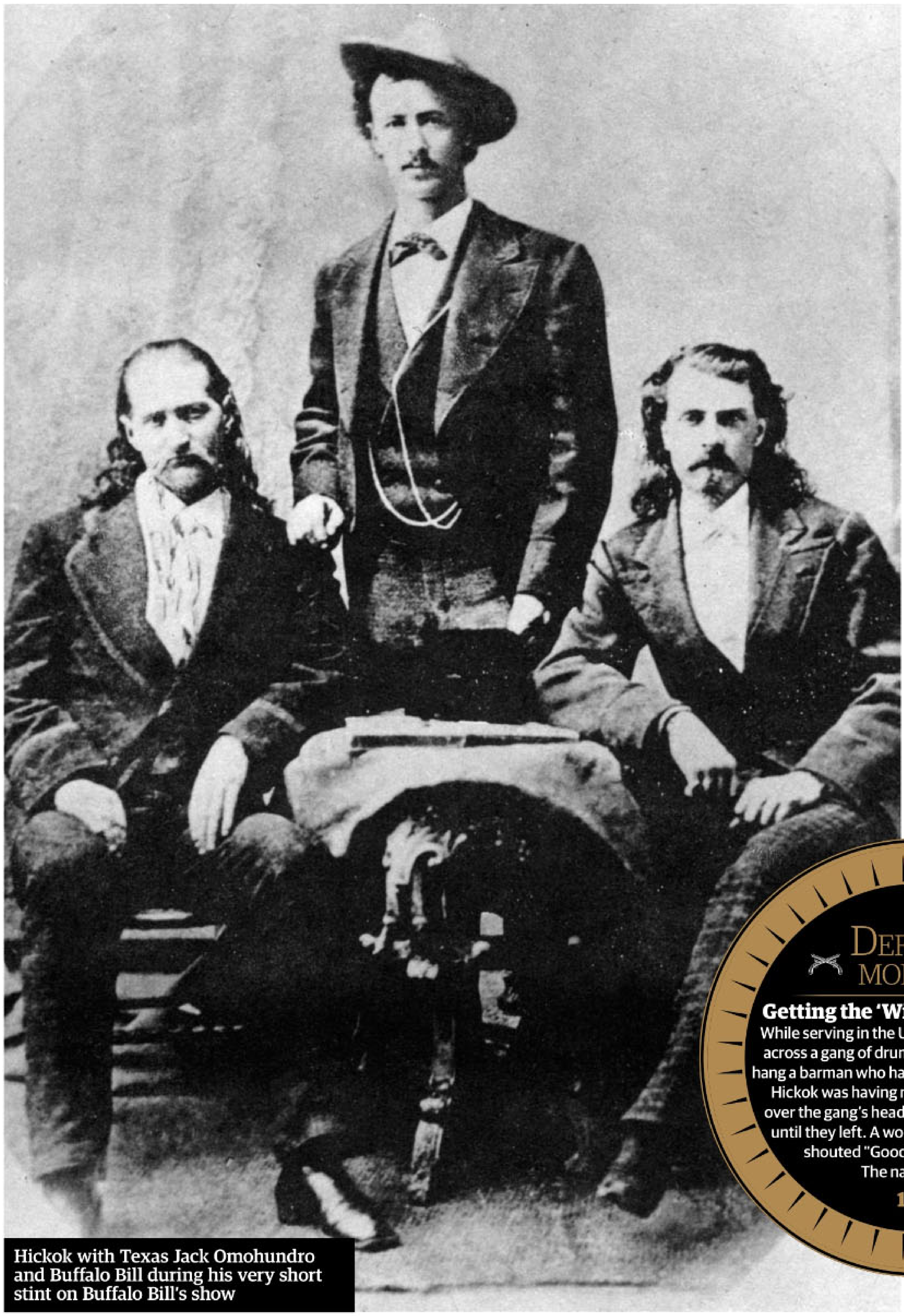
One version of the duel has Hickok drawing first but waiting for Tutt to take his shot. He does... and misses. Hickok then calmly rests his gun on his left arm, takes aim and fires, killing Tutt. Despite winning the duel, Hickok was arrested for murder, later reduced to manslaughter. However, he was acquitted at trial, causing a public backlash. In addition to the outrage, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* published an interview with Hickok, using the 'Wild Bill' nickname, detailing how he had killed 'hundreds' of men. A legend was born, and Hickok only seems to have added to the image of him being a man not to mess with.

While working as a sheriff in Ellis County, Kansas, he killed two men. A drunk Bill Mulvey was stumbling through the town, shooting mirrors and whiskey bottles and shouting how he had come to kill Hickok. When Hickok arrived at the scene, Mulvey raised his rifle, ready to shoot. Hickok instead waved his hand, as if getting the attention of someone behind Mulvey, and shouted "Don't shoot him in the back, he's drunk!" Mulvey duly turned round to see who was behind him, only to then be shot through the temple by Hickok.

The second man, Samuel Strawhun, was causing a disturbance in a saloon early one morning. After making certain remarks about Hickok, the sheriff shot Strawhun in the head. Hickok's defence was that he had "tried to restore order". Eye witness accounts didn't quite match Hickok's recollection, but the shooting was considered justified anyway. However, he was not re-elected and instead became marshal of Abilene in 1871, one of the toughest towns in the West, rife with gambling and prostitution. It was while serving as sheriff of Abilene that Hickok's life started to go downhill.

It all began with an obscene saloon sign. The Bull's Head Tavern was established by gambler Ben Thompson and businessman Phil Coe. To advertise their drinking hole, the two had painted a bull with an erect penis on the side of the building. Citizens were not pleased and told the sheriff. After asking the pair to amend the image and getting nowhere, Hickok simply changed it himself.

The pair were furious, and after trying to get someone to kill Hickok, Coe started boasting about his shooting prowess, saying he could "kill a crow


Hickok with Texas Jack Omohundro and Buffalo Bill during his very short stint on Buffalo Bill's show

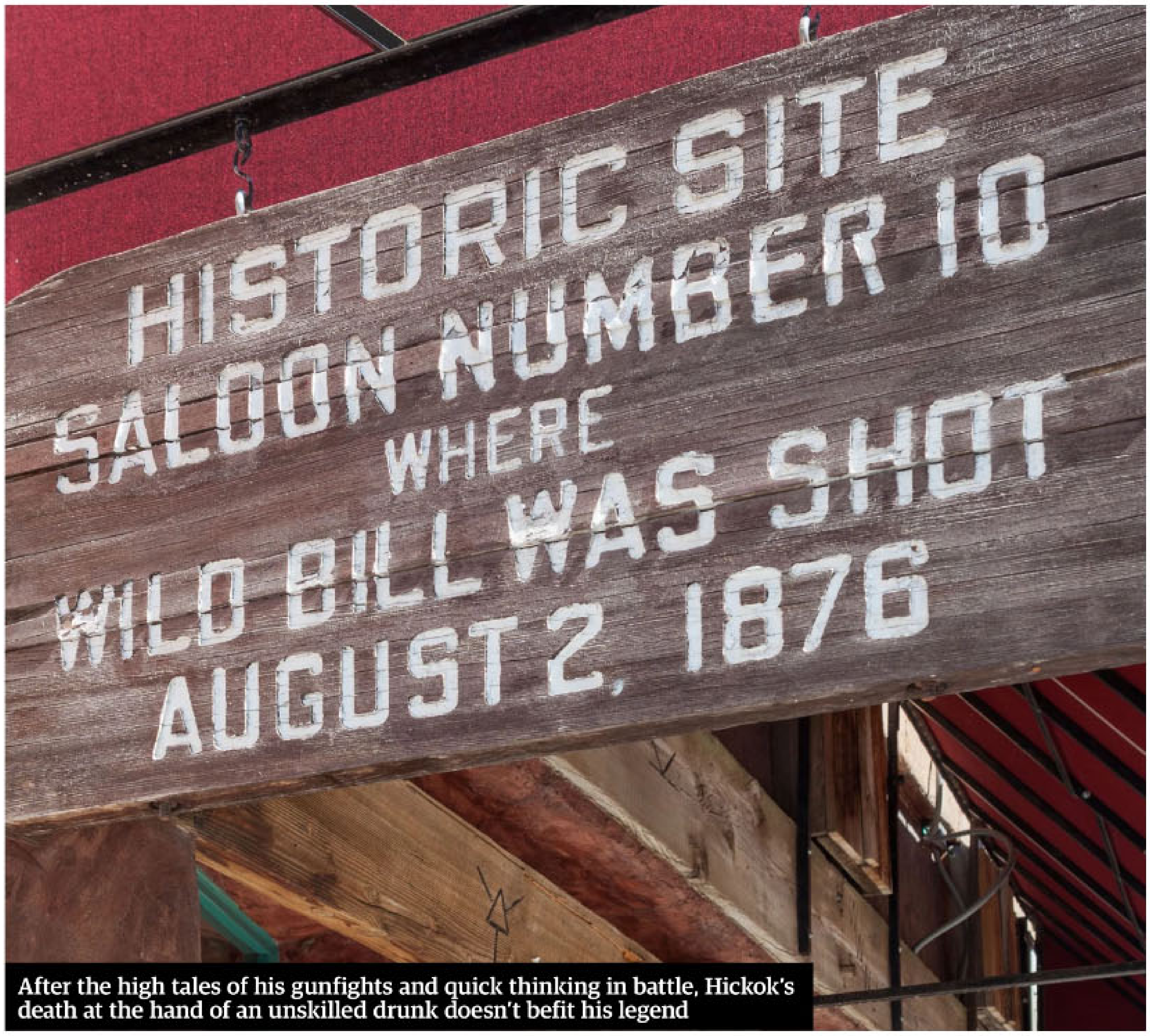
DEFINING MOMENT

Getting the 'Wild Bill' nickname

While serving in the Union Army, Hickok came across a gang of drunks who were planning to hang a barman who had shot a criminal in a fight. Hickok was having none of it. He shot twice over the gang's heads and stared them down until they left. A woman who was watching shouted "Good for you, Wild Bill!" The name stuck.

1861

> "Strawhun made remarks about Hickok, who then shot Strawhun in the head"



After the high tales of his gunfights and quick thinking in battle, Hickok's death at the hand of an unskilled drunk doesn't befit his legend

on the wing". Hickok's reply, "Did the crow have a pistol? Was he shooting back? I will be," went on to become a famous saying of the Wild West. Coe was eventually shot by Hickok, but in the confusion, Hickok also shot his deputy. He was relieved of duty and the event marked a new, darker chapter of his life.

In 1873, Hickok met up with his old friend Buffalo Bill, who invited him to join his acting troupe. Hickok agreed but hated every minute of it, often hiding behind the scenery and even shooting out the spotlight in one show when it shone on him. He took to gambling, managing to make a living but aware that his old shooting skills were getting worse. In 1876, a doctor gave him the bad news that he had glaucoma, and he knew that his time as a marksman was over. He was 39.

Hickok descended into a fog of drinking and gambling, often being arrested for vagrancy. He did marry, wedding circus owner Agnes Thatcher, who he seemed to genuinely love, but he would still go off to gamble and drink.

It was while gambling at Nuttal & Mann's Saloon in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, that Hickok would meet a bloody end. A man called Jack McCall joined the poker table Hickok was at, but he was drunk and soon started losing a lot of money. Hickok joked that he should stop playing until he could cover his debts and offered him some money to buy him breakfast. McCall was utterly humiliated but he still took Hickok's money.

The next day, Hickok was back at the table. But on this occasion he broke the habit of a lifetime. He would usually sit with his back to the wall so that he could keep an eye on a room without someone creeping up behind him. This time, the only room at the table was with its back to the entrance. He asked another man to change seats twice but his request was refused. The draw of the table was too much, though, so he sat down to play.

Unknown to Hickok, McCall entered the saloon. Drawing his Colt .45 calibre revolver, he walked up behind Hickok, cried "Damn you, take that!" and shot him in the back of the head. The bullet blew through Hickok's right cheek and hit another player in the left wrist. Hickok died instantly.

Perhaps fittingly given his love of gambling, the hand Hickok was holding when he was shot has become a famous poker hand. He was playing a game of five-card draw when he was killed, holding a pair of black aces and a pair of black eights as McCall fired. This hand became known as the 'dead man's hand', and is still referred to in the same way today.

DEFINING MOMENT

Guilt at shooting his deputy

While Hickok is attending to a crowd following a street brawl, Coe fires two shots. Hickok tries to arrest him for firing a pistol, but Coe aims at Hickok, who replies by shooting him dead. In the chaos, Hickok sees someone running to him, so he turns and shoots, accidentally killing his deputy. He never recovers from the guilt.

5 Oct 1871

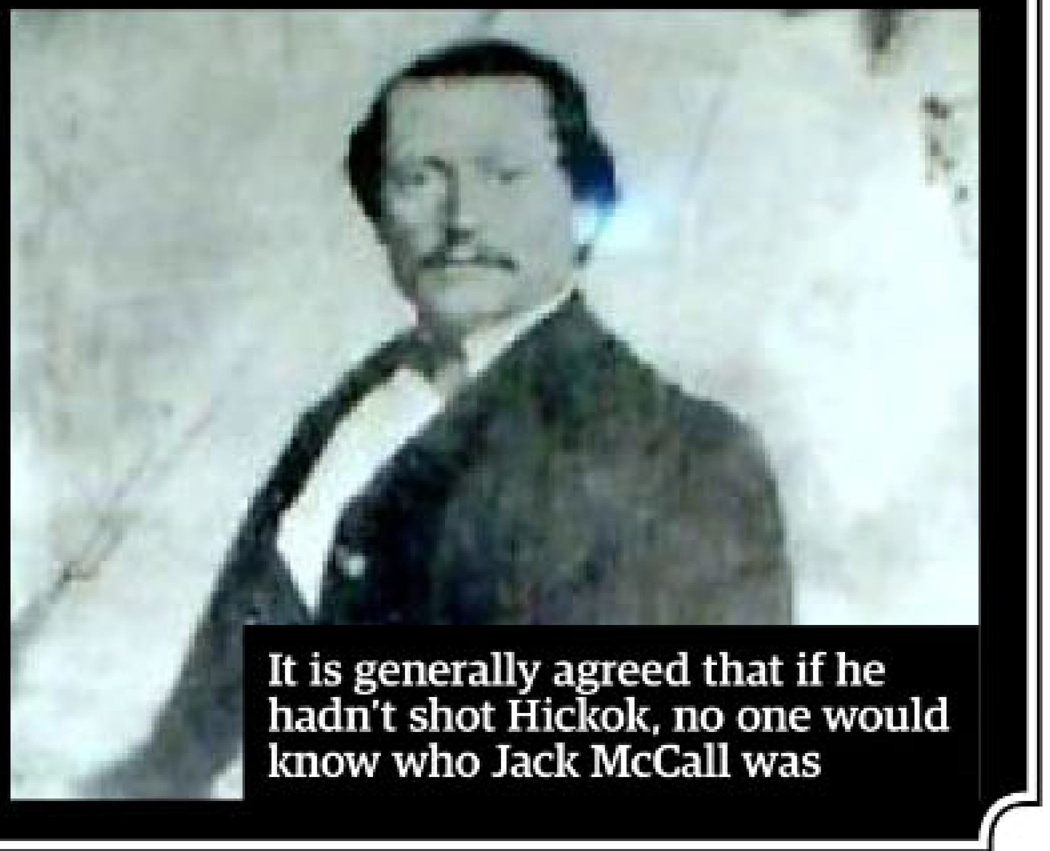
The accidental assassin

Jack McCall wasn't known for anything other than being a drunk and stupid, but by killing Hickok, he secured his place in the Wild West history books. He also secured his execution, although it came in a bit of a farcical way.

After the shooting, McCall stood in front of a 'miner's jury', made up of a rough and ready group of miners and businessmen. McCall's defence was that he killed Hickok to avenge the death of his brother. While there is no definite record of Hickok killing McCall's sibling, it is a possibility. True or not, the argument worked and McCall was acquitted.

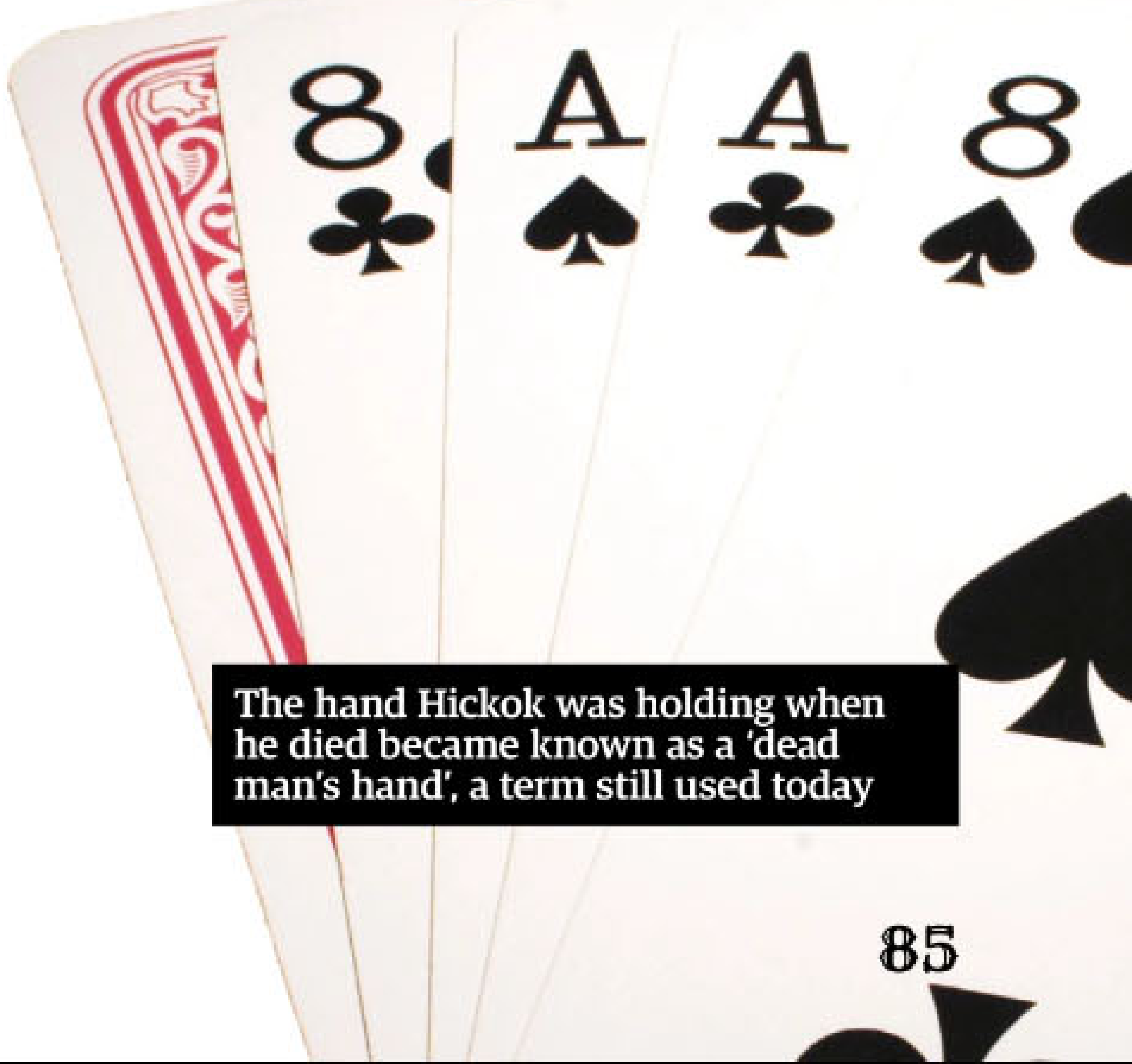
The public had a hard time believing this. An editorial in the *Black Hills Pioneer* read "Should it ever be our misfortune to kill a man… we would simply ask that our trial may take place in some of the mining camps of these hills." Yet despite the widespread disbelief, McCall looked set to escape punishement. Then he stupidly bragged about killing Hickok, for which he was arrested and put on trial.

The fact that his first trial was somewhat unusual and conducted in Indian country meant the new trial wasn't considered double jeopardy. It took place in Yankton, and this time McCall was found guilty of murder. He was subsequently hanged on 1 March, 1877. When the cemetery he was buried in had to move in 1881, upon exhumation McCall was found with the noose still around his neck.

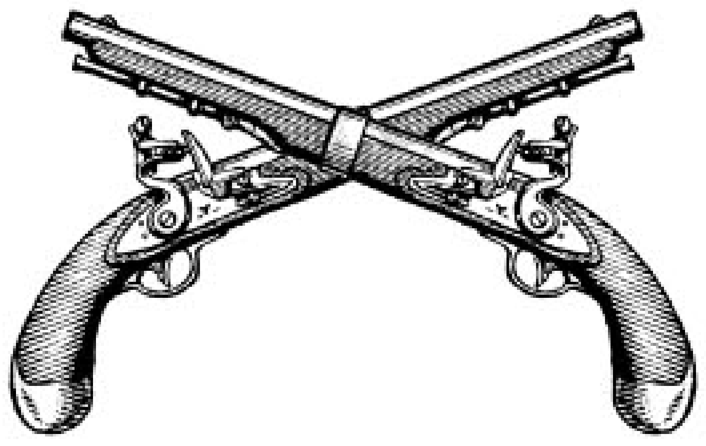


It is generally agreed that if he hadn't shot Hickok, no one would know who Jack McCall was

© Alamy; Thinkstock; Wiki: Tage Olsin



The hand Hickok was holding when he died became known as a 'dead man's hand', a term still used today



JESSE JAMES

The Robin Hood of Missouri, or a self-mythologising murderer and thief?

Jesse James was a celebrity in his lifetime, and he remains an icon of the Wild West and a hero of the Confederate South. Born in Clay County, Missouri, in 1847, James was the middle of three children. His mother Zerelda had attended Catholic school in Kentucky, and his father, Robert, was a prosperous, slave-holding farmer and evangelical preacher. When Jesse was three, his father, having gone West to save souls in the Gold Rush, died. Zerelda married twice in the next five years, giving Jesse four half-siblings.

Through the 1850s, the USA slid towards civil war. Missouri was on the border between the North and the South, and the front line cut across its society. Clay County, with more slaveholders and more slaves than average, was known as 'Little Dixie'. When the Civil War began in 1861, Jesse's elder brother Frank joined the Confederate Army.

Missouri became a battleground for militias, the 'Bushwhackers' for the Confederacy, the 'Jayhawkers' for the Union. Both groups committed atrocities. The Bushwhackers murdered Unionist sympathisers and executed Unionist prisoners, sometimes scalping the corpses. The Jayhawkers burned farms, executed Confederate sympathisers and even expelled them from Missouri. In 1863, after Frank James had joined the Bushwhackers, a Jayhawker militia raided his family's farm. The Unionists tortured Jesse's stepfather, and may have flogged 15-year-old Jesse too. Frank escaped and joined Quantrill's Raiders, a notorious guerrilla cavalry unit led by William C Quantrill. Frank probably took part in the massacre by Quantrill's Raiders of more than 200 men and boys at the Jayhawker stronghold of Lawrence, Kansas, in August 1863.

Frank returned home in the summer of 1864, and recruited his younger brother. Soon, they were riding with another notorious Bushwhacker leader, William 'Bloody Bill' Anderson. Jesse was shot in the chest within weeks. He recovered in time to take part in the Centralia Massacre. In September 1864, Anderson's men, drunk on whiskey, raided Centralia, Missouri, and captured a train. They ordered the 23 Union soldiers on the train to strip, then shot, maimed and scalped them all. Pursued by a Jayhawker militia, the next day Anderson's men ambushed and slaughtered more than 100 men.

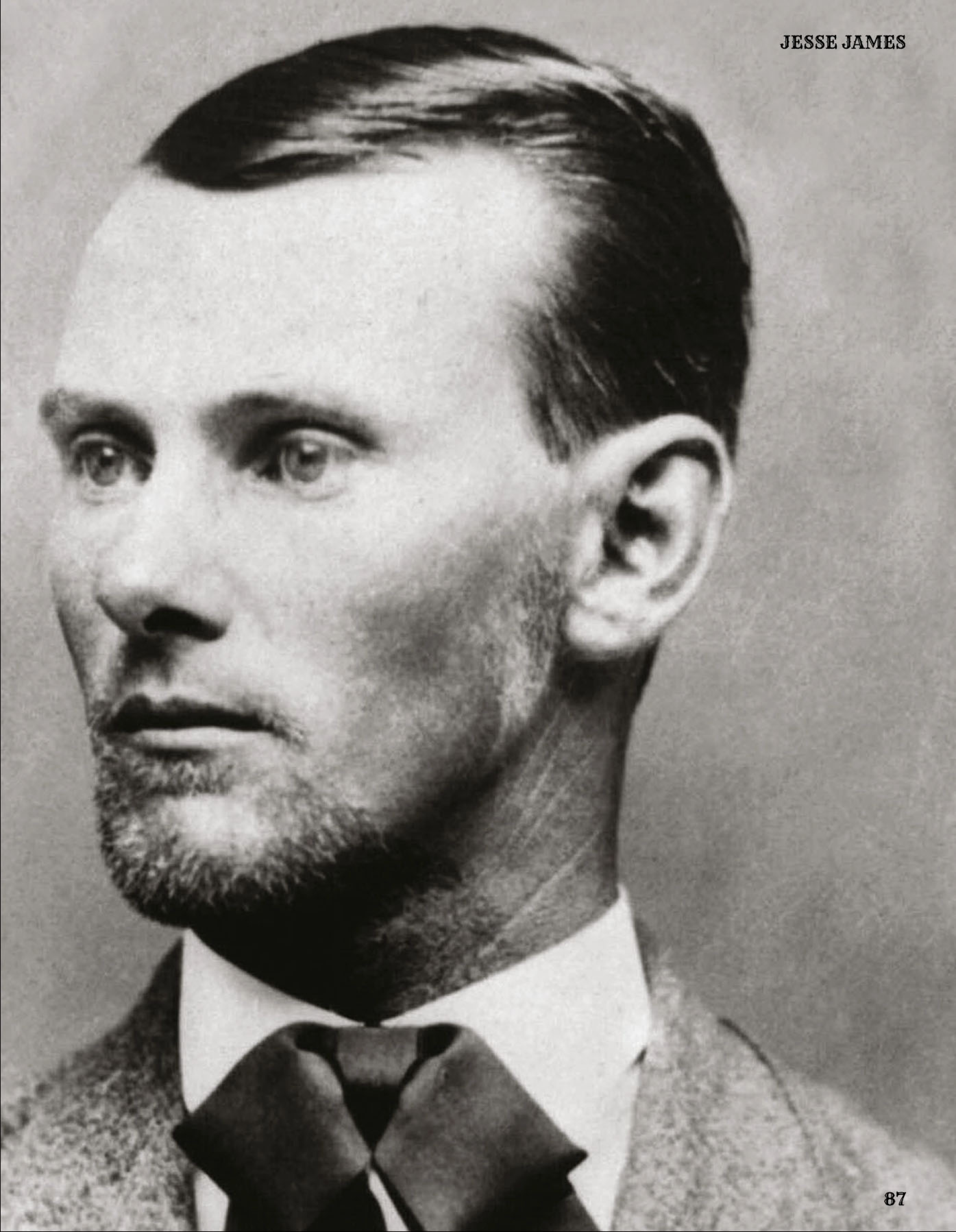
When the Union authorities expelled Jesse and Frank's family from Clay County, and after Anderson's death a few weeks later, the brothers split. Frank went into Kentucky with Quantrill, and Jesse into Texas with Anderson's lieutenant, Archie Clement. In a fight with a Union patrol near Lexington, Jesse survived a second chest wound. Recovering at his uncle's house in nearby Harlem, he fell in love with his first cousin, Zerelda Mimms.

DEFINING MOMENT

Taking the reins

When Frank James was identified as a member of a Confederate guerrilla unit operating in Clay County, a Union militia raided his family's farm. Jesse, then 15, witnessed the mock hanging of his stepfather Reuben Samuels. It is believed that the Jayhawkers whipped Jesse too. By the end of the year, Jesse had joined Frank's militia unit.

May 1863



Jesse (left) and Frank James in 1872

Bob, Jim and Cole Younger, sitting left to right with their sister Henrietta

The war ended in 1865, but Jesse, like many Confederate veterans, failed to adjust to the peace. The society he had known was in ruins, and the Republican government was set upon Reconstruction, the rebuilding of Southern society. The Bushwhackers carried on their war. In 1866, Clement's gang conducted the USA's first armed bank robbery, in a bank owned by Republican ex-Jayhawkers. A government militia killed Clement soon after, but his gang carried on robbing banks, killing civilians in the process.

DEFINING MOMENT

The Pinkerton Agency firebombs the family farm

After the gang killed two agents the Pinkerton Agency had sent to infiltrate Zerelda Samuels' farm, Allen Pinkerton, founder of the detective agency, sought revenge. In the dead of night, detectives threw an incendiary into the farmhouse. Jesse's half-brother was killed, and Zerelda lost an arm.

25 January 1875

In 1869, raiding a bank in Gallatin, Missouri, Jesse murdered a cashier; he had mistaken him for the killer of 'Bloody Bill' Anderson. The killing, and the brothers' daring escape from the posse that chased them out of town, made Jesse the most famous of the ex-guerrilla 'outlaws'.

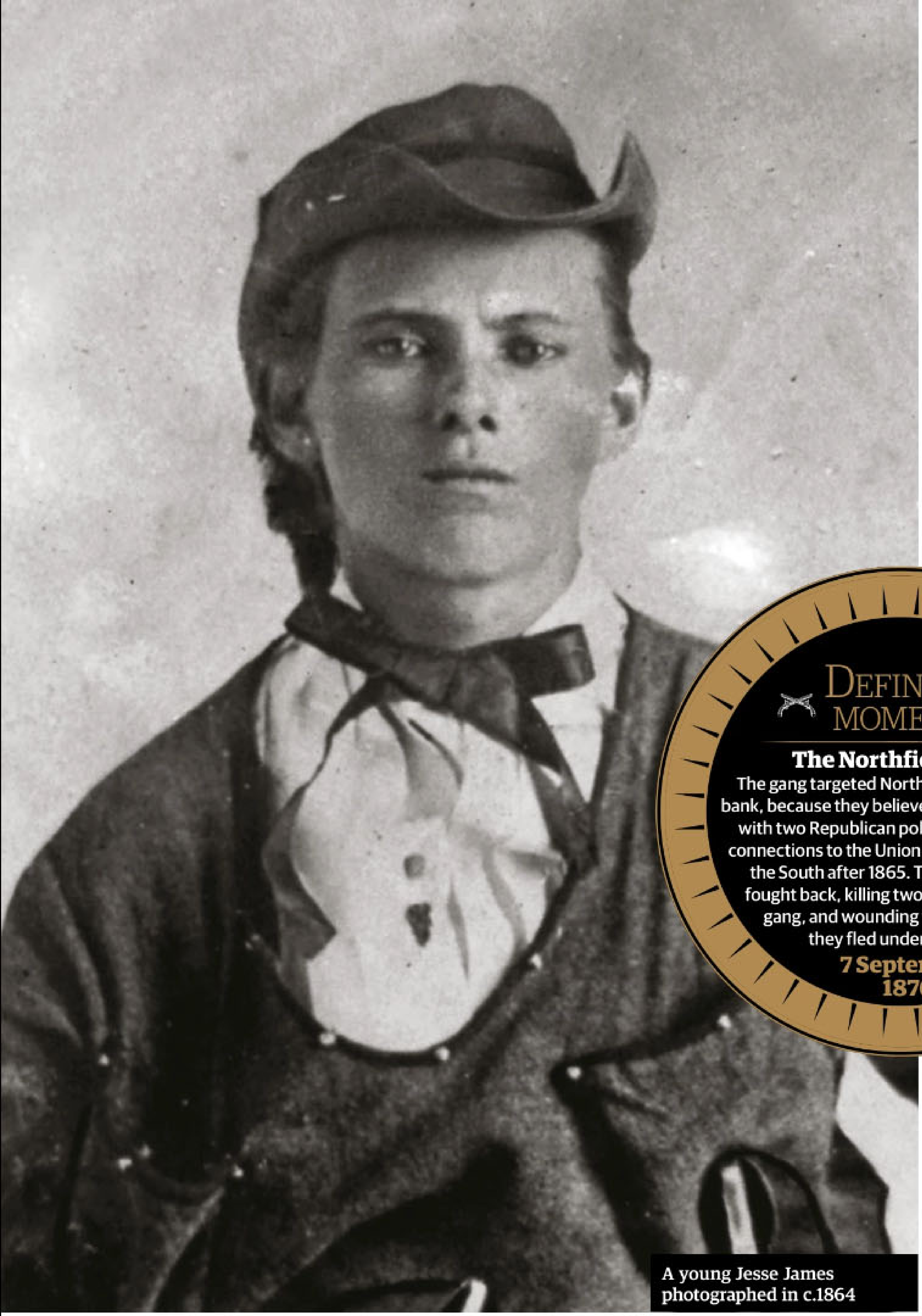
Jesse liked his fame. He formed an alliance with another ex-Confederate cavalryman, John Edwards, the editor of the *Kansas City Times*, who published letters in which James claimed his innocence, defended the Confederacy and denounced the Republicans. Edwards, who campaigned to undo Reconstruction by bringing ex-Confederates to office in Missouri, praised James for remaining true to old Dixie. The legend of Jesse James was born in the pages of the *Kansas City Times*.

Meanwhile, the James brothers teamed up with the Younger brothers, four ex-Bushwhackers from Missouri. For the next six years, the gang ranged across Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri and Louisiana, robbing banks, trains and stagecoaches. Numerous civilians were killed along the way, but the gang also acquired a reputation for chivalry. Not all of this was the work of John Edwards of the *Kansas City Times*.

In 1872, after a young girl had been shot in crossfire during a bank robbery at Columbia, Kentucky, Jesse wrote to the *Kansas City Times* denying that his men had shot her, even though by clearing his name so publicly, he incriminated the Younger Brothers in the robbery. In January 1874, during a stagecoach robbery in Arkansas, the gang returned a watch to its owner when they discovered that he was a Confederate veteran. They told him that the North had driven them to crime. Two weeks later, when the gang robbed a train at Gads Hill, Missouri, they checked the passengers' hands so as to not steal from any manual labourers.

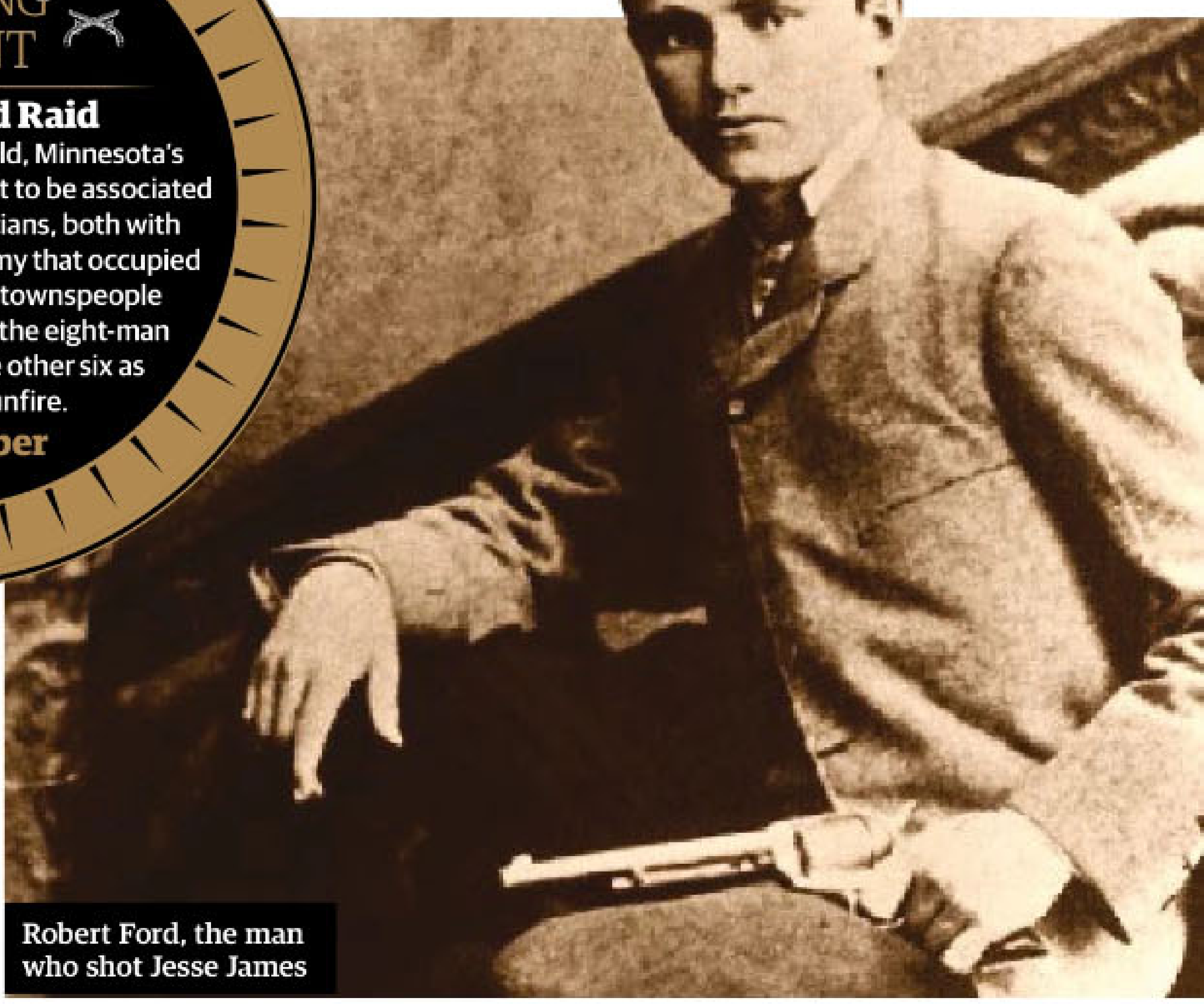
By now, the Pinkerton Detective Agency was on their trail. In January 1875, following the murder of several Pinkerton agents, a group of Pinkerton detectives firebombed the James family farm. Jesse's mother lost her right arm, and Jesse's nine-year-old half-brother Archie was killed.

The gang's luck ran out on 7 September 1876, when it raided the First National Bank at Northfield, Minnesota. While Frank James, Bob Younger and an accomplice named Charlie Pitts held up the bank, Jesse James and four other men rode up and down the street, firing their guns in the air to keep people indoors. But the residents broke out their own weapons. Two of the gang were killed. Cole Younger was hit in the leg, Bob Younger in the arm, and Jim Younger in the face. The survivors escaped with only



A young Jesse James photographed in c.1864

The gun that shot Jesse James was a Smith & Wesson Model 3



Robert Ford, the man who shot Jesse James

DEFINING MOMENT

The Northfield Raid

The gang targeted Northfield, Minnesota's bank, because they believed it to be associated with two Republican politicians, both with connections to the Union army that occupied the South after 1865. The townspeople fought back, killing two of the eight-man gang, and wounding the other six as they fled under gunfire.

7 September 1876

"When the gang robbed a train at Gads Hill, they checked the passengers' hands so as to not steal from any manual labourers"

a few bags of nickels, and all had been wounded - Jesse in the leg - as they fled.

Chased by hundreds of militiamen, the gang split up. Two weeks later, the Youngers and Charlie Pitts were captured after a gunfight near La Salle, Minnesota. Tried, they received life sentences.

Frank and Jesse escaped to a farm in Nashville, Tennessee. They lived quietly for the next three years, until Jesse could no longer bear the tedium. In early 1879, he recruited a new gang and returned to crime. After a spree of train robberies, Missouri's new governor Thomas T Crittenden persuaded his officials and the railroad executives to offer a large reward for James's capture. But no one turned the gang in: sympathy ran high among ex-Confederates.

Instead, James was murdered in his own home by one of his own men, a new recruit named Robert Ford. With his brother Charley, Robert Ford approached Governor Crittenden and agreed to solve the problem of Jesse James in return for a reward of $5,000. Just after breakfast on 3 April 1882, as an unarmed James climbed onto a chair in his living room to wipe dust from a picture, Robert Ford shot him in the back of the head at point-blank range.

In a single day, the Ford brothers surrendered, were indicted for murder, sentenced to death and then pardoned. The cowardly nature of James's killing, and the impression that Missouri's governor had conspired James's assassination, further burnished the legend of Jesse James. Charley Ford, a morphine addict, committed suicide the following year.

In June 1892, a man named Edward O'Kelley served the verdict of the court of public opinion on Robert Ford - with both barrels of a shotgun. After murdering James, Ford had opened a saloon in Creede, Colorado. O'Kelley was sentenced to life in prison, but was pardoned in 1902 after a petition signed by thousands.

Surprisingly, several of the key members of the James-Younger gang survived - and played a part in maintaining the legend of Jesse James. Frank James surrendered in October 1882 in Missouri, apparently on the condition that he would not be extradited to Northfield, Minnesota. Frank was tried for two robberies in Missouri, but convicted of neither.

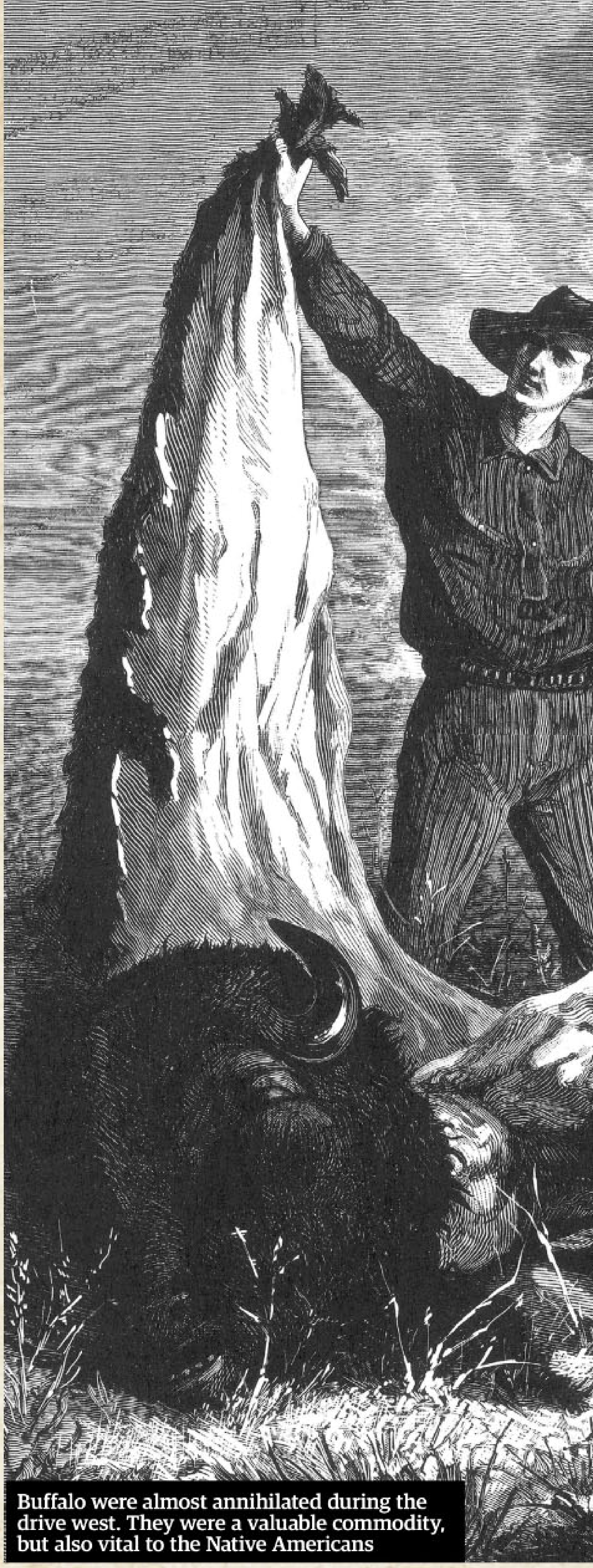
The Younger brothers served time in a Minnesota prison, but never assisted the prosecution of Frank James. Bob Younger died of tuberculosis in jail, but in 1901, Cole and Jim Younger were paroled on the condition they remained in Minnesota. Jim Younger shot himself in 1902. A year later, Cole Younger was pardoned on condition that he never return to Minnesota. He went home to Missouri and joined a 'Wild West' show with Frank James.

This was a different age: the Gilded Age of fantastic fortunes and populist politicians. Jesse James was remembered as a Robin Hood, an ordinary man who had stood up against powerful corporations, rather than the killer who had donned a Ku Klux Klan hood - and not just as a disguise. Jesse James robbed the rich - the banks and the railroads - but without feeding the poor. If he was loyal to his family and friends, he was also a habitual thief and killer.

© Alamy, Thinkstock

WHEN THE BUFFALO ROAMED

The buffalo hunt was part business, part 'sport' and part military strategy. The Native Americans would never forget it. The buffalo barely survived



Buffalo were almost annihilated during the drive west. They were a valuable commodity, but also vital to the Native Americans

Few animals represent the Old West better than the mighty buffalo, it's even mentioned in cowboy folk song, *Home On The Range*. Like the rattlesnake, the Marshal's badge and the gunslinger, it's a quintessential image of the Old West. But the buffalo were almost wiped out during the latter half of the 19th century. For hunters it was a business, for many it was 'sport,' for the US Army it was a deliberate tactic to starve the natives into submission.

Their skins and meat were valuable commodities. Their bones could be used as knife handles or ground to make fertiliser. They were also easily hunted, having no defence against human predators. When one buffalo was shot, others gathered round it. Hunters could make short work of entire herds with repeating rifles like the 1873 Winchester and the muzzle-loading Sharps. 'Sport' hunters didn't kill them for their meat, skins or bones. They simply shot them in huge numbers for entertainment, leaving their carcasses wherever they found them.

Friction between hunters and natives grew as the buffalo dwindled, often leading to violence. Natives, especially the fierce Comanche and Cheyenne tribes, raided hunting camps to avenge the extermination of the buffalo. Hunters in turn avenged the raids with reprisals of their own, as did the US Army. The Buffalo Hunters' War of 1877 was particularly violent, with dozens killed or injured.

While hunters like 'Buffalo Bill' Cody viewed them as a commodity, many travelling west shot them simply for fun. They were easy targets and it livened up long, dull train journeys when trains stopped and passengers broke out their rifles. Railroad hunts were known as 'raised hunting,' with passengers climbing on top of carriages to get an easier shot.

Both commercial and 'sport' hunting were not only tolerated by the authorities, but actively encouraged. Less interested in money and 'sport,' the Federal Government had much darker motives for wanting buffalo exterminated. For Native Americans, the destruction of the buffalo equated to destroying their way of life.

Westward expansion had met with hostility from many Native Americans. Their way of life was threatened and they knew it, many opting to resist by any means available. The US government, on the other hand, was absolutely determined to crush the dissent and weren't at all fussy about how they did it. Treaties were routinely signed and routinely broken. When natives retaliated they faced swift, brutal reprisals. As Sioux leader Sitting Bull put it; "Only seven years ago we made a treaty by which we were assured that the buffalo country should be left to us forever. Now they threaten to take that from us also."

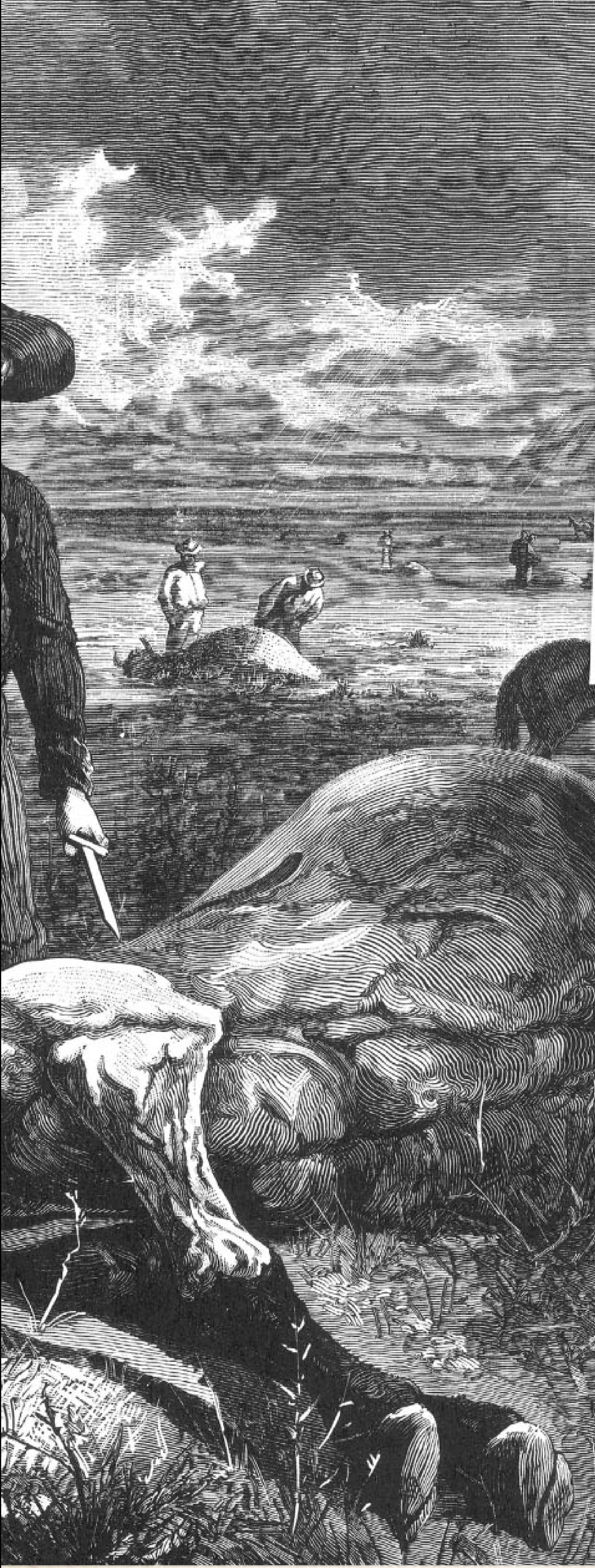
One way was forcing them to give up their nomadic, hunter-gathering lifestyle, confining them to reservations. Reservations belonged to the Federal Government, usually land deemed worthless and, in the eyes of many, fit only for the natives. They were often situated hundreds of miles from buffalo hunting grounds to discourage natives from pursuing their traditional ways.

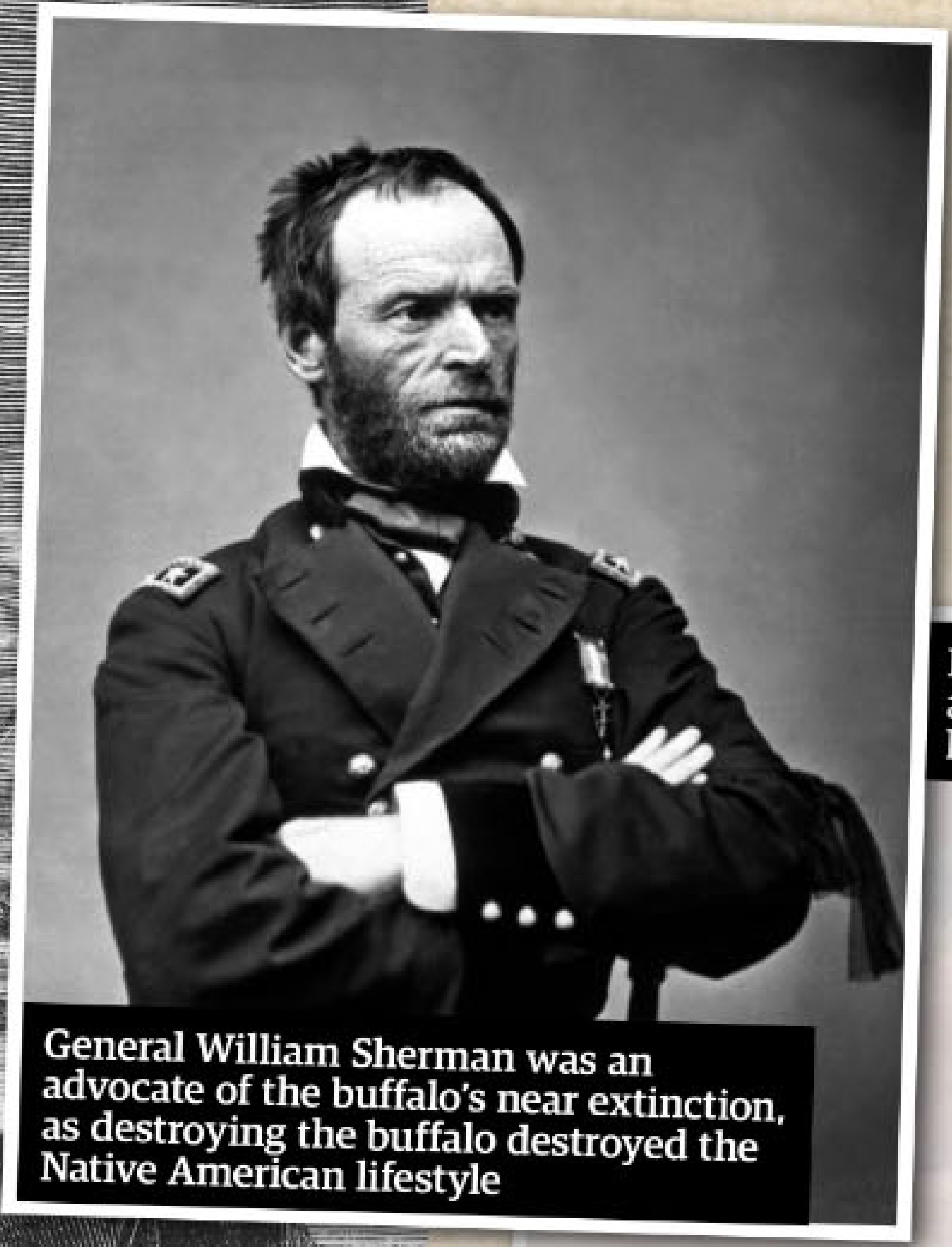
The problem, in so vast a country, was forcing them onto reservations and actually keeping them there. Once on a reservation, they would be dependent on food supplies delivered by the government; supplies that could be suspended or cut entirely as a form of collective punishment. Positioning reservations far from buffalo was intended to curb their nomadic existence, but often had the opposite effect. Many 'Reservation Indians,' especially among the Cheyenne and Sioux, still left to hunt buffalo, refusing to abandon their traditional way of life.

The government knew enough about them to understand that nomadic existence depends on readily-available food. Buffalo, for instance. The fewer buffalo there were, the harder it would be to live outside the reservations. In effect, buffalo hunting was a weapon of war, encouraged to starve the Native Americans into submission.

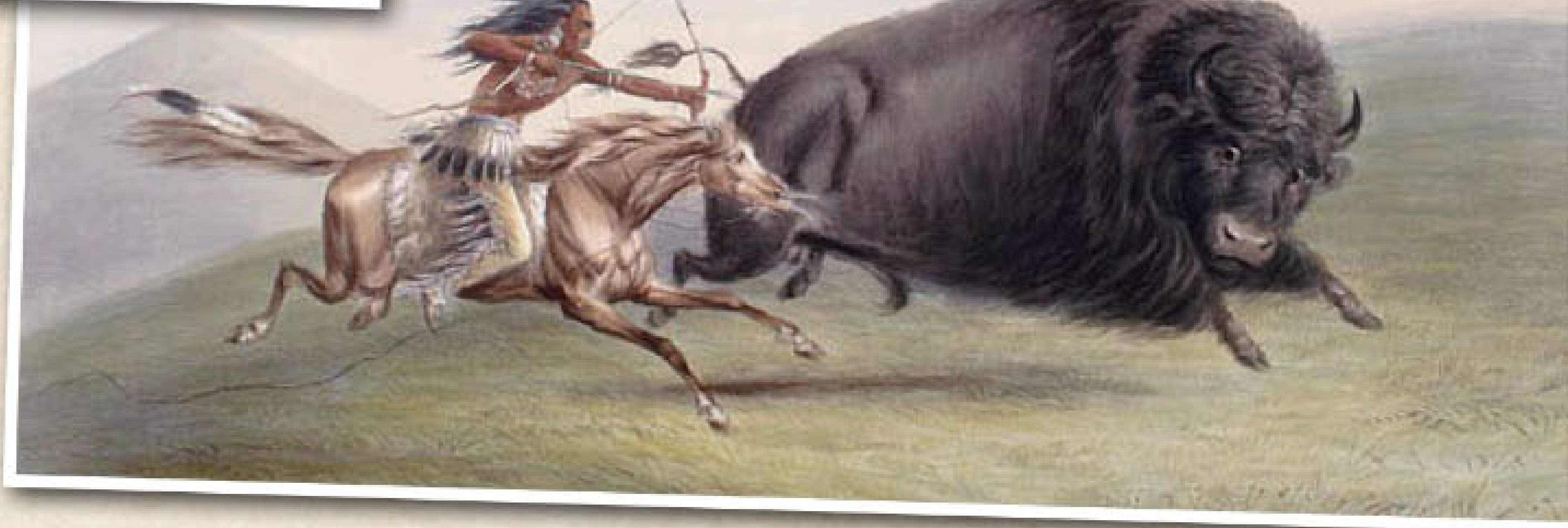
It was collective punishment of all natives for resistance mounted only by some. A dirty tactic that today would be considered a war crime, but effective nonetheless. It wasn't a new idea, either. One of its principal architects was General William Tecumseh Sherman, whose army ravaged the Confederacy during the Civil War.

'Sherman's March' had been a massive punitive expedition with the express intent of destroying anything and everything useful to the Confederate war effort. It also destroyed a great deal that wasn't. Railroads were ripped up, food supplies burned, livestock shot and left to rot in the wake of Sherman's army. Almost all of Atlanta was burnt to the ground. If it worked against the Confederacy, Sherman reasoned, it should be equally effective against Native Americans. It was.





General William Sherman was an advocate of the buffalo's near extinction, as destroying the buffalo destroyed the Native American lifestyle



Native Americans viewed buffalo as sacred, essential to their way of life; whites weren't so respectful

General Winfield Scott Hancock made it very clear to the tribes; "You know well that the game is getting very scarce and that you must soon have some other means of living; you should therefore cultivate the friendship of the white man, so that when the game is all gone, they may take care of you if necessary."

As a tactic it was successful. Environmentally it was a disaster. There had once been millions of buffalo roaming the plains and many thousands of natives peaceably following them. By the end of the 19th century, buffalo numbered mere hundreds. As forts and settlements spread steadily westward the buffalo had fewer, smaller areas where they could live and breed in safety.

What were once vast herds of buffalo are now rarities; small groups wandering over the plains. Hunted almost to extinction, their numbers are very slowly growing. But they will never approach their former glory.

The 1873 Winchester repeating rifle, a classic Old West artefact and often a buffalo hunter's weapon of choice

★ Pat Garrett BUFFALO HUNTER ★

Most people remember Pat Garrett for having shot notorious outlaw William 'Billy the Kid' Bonney at Old Fort Sumner on 14 July 1881. That isn't where his story begins, though. Born in Alabama in 1850, Garrett worked as a buffalo hunter before becoming sheriff of Lincoln County, New Mexico and hunting outlaws instead.

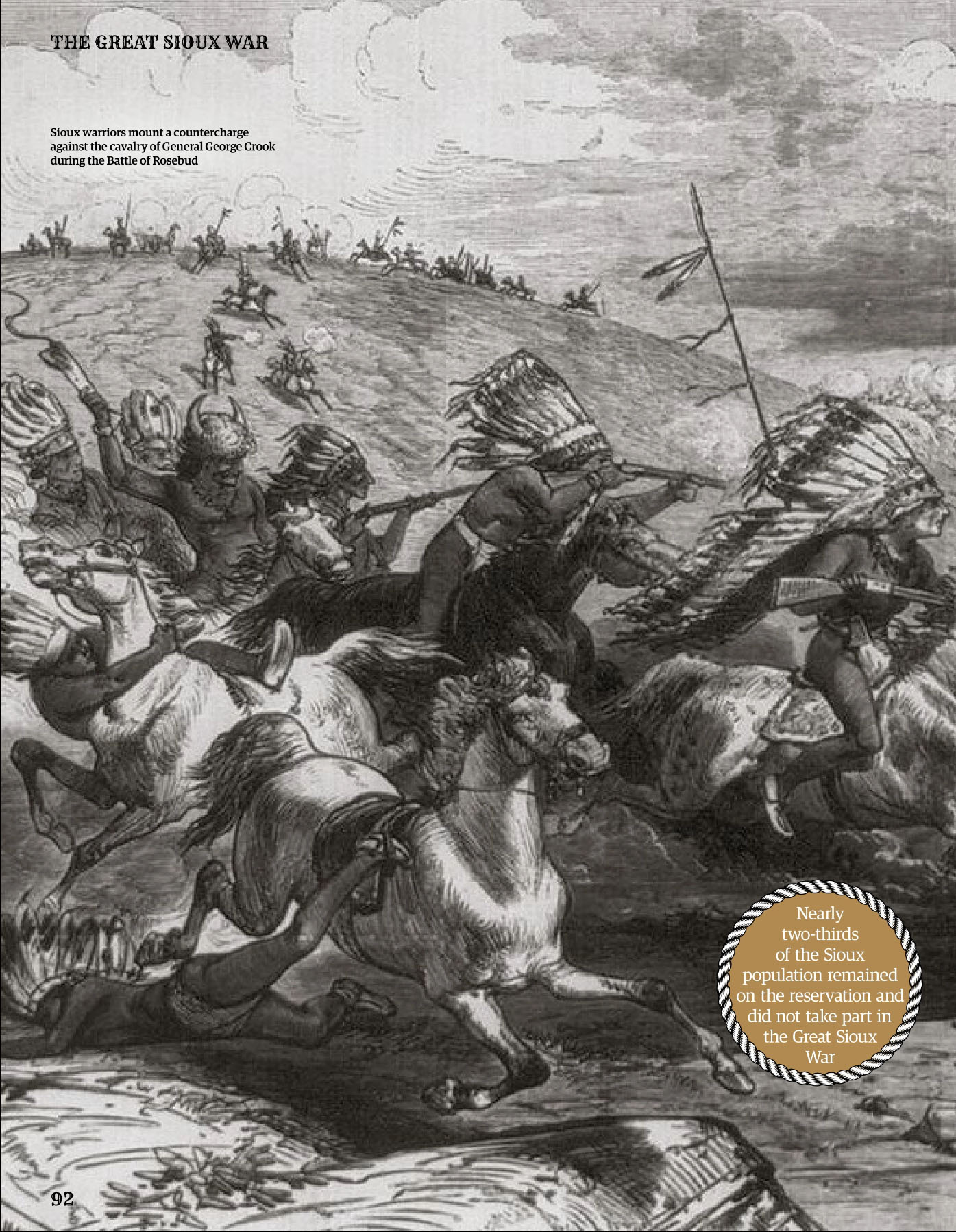
Garrett spent three winters between 1875 and 1877 hunting out of Fort Griffin, Texas. In 1876, already skilled at killing buffalo, Garrett killed his first man. Buffalo skinner Joe Briscoe, feeling Garrett had insulted him, charged him with an axe. Garrett immediately shot him dead, the killing being accepted as self-defence.

In the winter of 1877, Comanche braves raided hunting camps in reprisal for the endless slaughter of the buffalo. Some hunters responded by killing Comanches, making the dispute even more bitter. Garrett lost 800 buffalo hides in one raid. Feeling that his luck was against him and that west Texas was becoming too dangerous, he left the area, narrowly avoiding the Yellow House Canyon battle that marked the peak of the buffalo hunters' war with the Comanches.

While he managed to avoid Yellow House Canyon, he still kept his appointment with Billy the Kid.

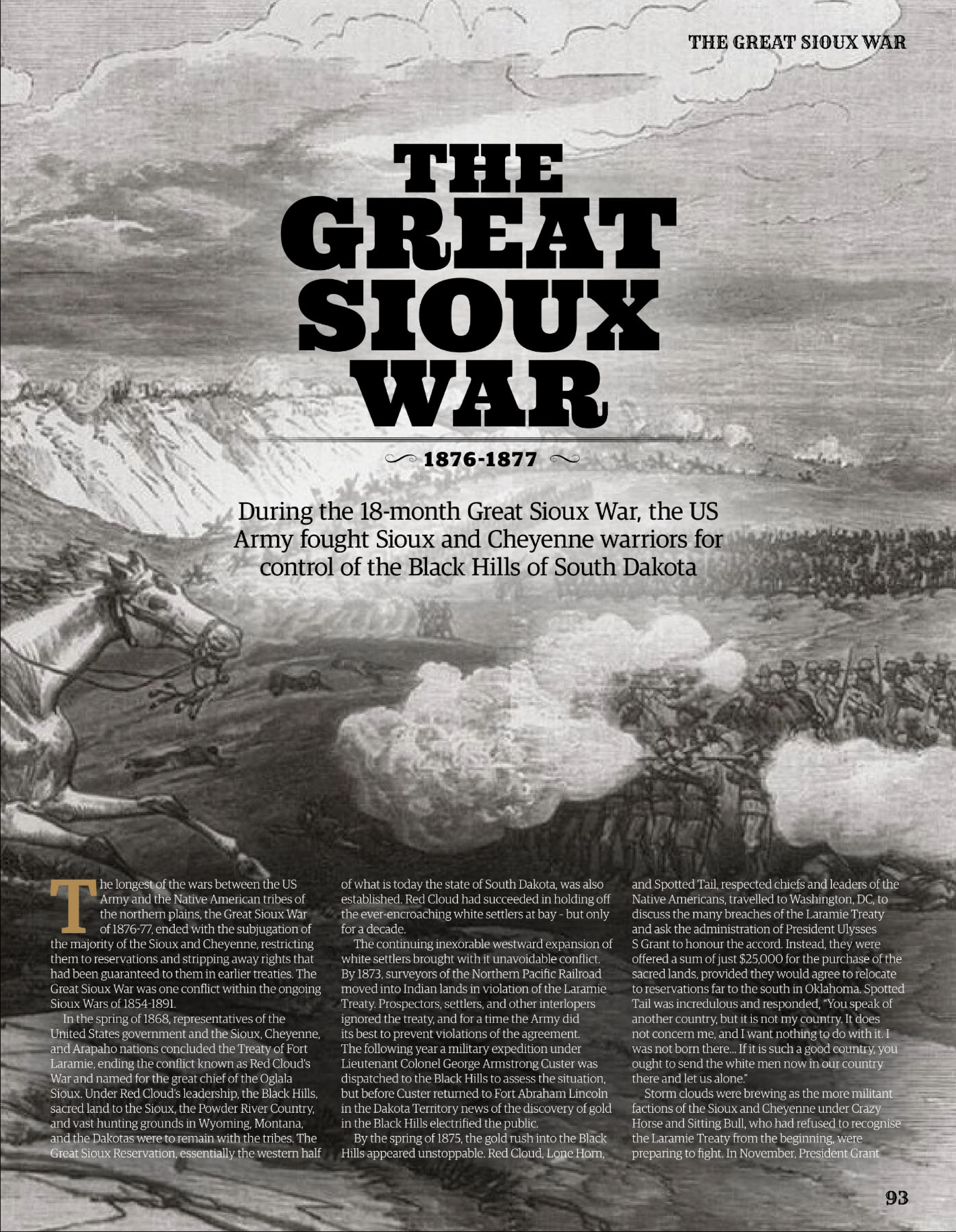
Pat Garrett achieved fame by shooting legendary outlaw Billy the Kid. Before hunting outlaws, Garrett hunted the buffalo

©Alamy, Wiki-Ricce



Sioux warriors mount a countercharge against the cavalry of General George Crook during the Battle of Rosebud

Nearly two-thirds of the Sioux population remained on the reservation and did not take part in the Great Sioux War



THE GREAT SIOUX WAR

1876-1877

During the 18-month Great Sioux War, the US Army fought Sioux and Cheyenne warriors for control of the Black Hills of South Dakota

The longest of the wars between the US Army and the Native American tribes of the northern plains, the Great Sioux War of 1876-77, ended with the subjugation of the majority of the Sioux and Cheyenne, restricting them to reservations and stripping away rights that had been guaranteed to them in earlier treaties. The Great Sioux War was one conflict within the ongoing Sioux Wars of 1854-1891.

In the spring of 1868, representatives of the United States government and the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho nations concluded the Treaty of Fort Laramie, ending the conflict known as Red Cloud's War and named for the great chief of the Oglala Sioux. Under Red Cloud's leadership, the Black Hills, sacred land to the Sioux, the Powder River Country, and vast hunting grounds in Wyoming, Montana, and the Dakotas were to remain with the tribes. The Great Sioux Reservation, essentially the western half of what is today the state of South Dakota, was also established. Red Cloud had succeeded in holding off the ever-encroaching white settlers at bay - but only for a decade.

The continuing inexorable westward expansion of white settlers brought with it unavoidable conflict. By 1873, surveyors of the Northern Pacific Railroad moved into Indian lands in violation of the Laramie Treaty. Prospectors, settlers, and other interlopers ignored the treaty, and for a time the Army did its best to prevent violations of the agreement. The following year a military expedition under Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer was dispatched to the Black Hills to assess the situation, but before Custer returned to Fort Abraham Lincoln in the Dakota Territory news of the discovery of gold in the Black Hills electrified the public.

By the spring of 1875, the gold rush into the Black Hills appeared unstoppable. Red Cloud, Lone Horn, and Spotted Tail, respected chiefs and leaders of the Native Americans, travelled to Washington, DC, to discuss the many breaches of the Laramie Treaty and ask the administration of President Ulysses S Grant to honour the accord. Instead, they were offered a sum of just $25,000 for the purchase of the sacred lands, provided they would agree to relocate to reservations far to the south in Oklahoma. Spotted Tail was incredulous and responded, "You speak of another country, but it is not my country. It does not concern me, and I want nothing to do with it. I was not born there... If it is such a good country, you ought to send the white men now in our country there and let us alone."

Storm clouds were brewing as the more militant factions of the Sioux and Cheyenne under Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, who had refused to recognise the Laramie Treaty from the beginning, were preparing to fight. In November, President Grant met with General Phil Sheridan and General George Crook, commanders of the military Divisions of the Missouri and the Platte, to plan a new course of action. Those attending agreed that it was impossible to prevent further encroachment into Native lands. There was little alternative short of coercion to bring the Native Americans to heel. As a pretext for initiating a military campaign against those who refused to return to their reservation and join in negotiations, the government established a deadline of 31 January 1876, for compliance.

Crazy Horse was killed by a bayonet at Camp Robinson, Nebraska Territory, on 4 September 1877, trying to avoid arrest

While most of the Native Americans were already cooperating with the government, there remained approximately 7,000 Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho at large, including men, women, and children. Of these, perhaps only 2,500 to 3,000 were warriors. As expected, there was little response to the government ultimatum. The deadline eventually passed, and the US Army began to take action.

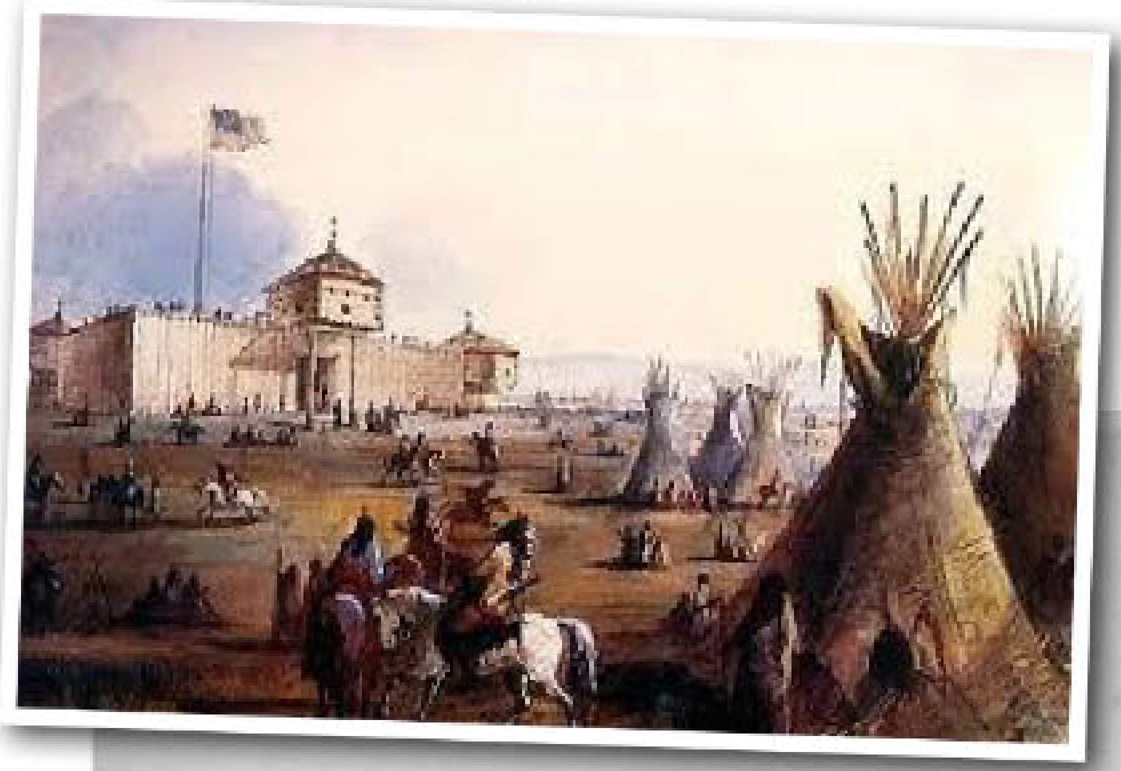
Although periodic skirmishes were nothing new – the Army had destroyed numerous troublesome Northern Cheyenne encampments since 1875 – the Great Sioux War was intended to settle the question of land ownership and the future of the Native American tribes once and for all. On 8 February 1876, General Sheridan ordered an offensive to begin.

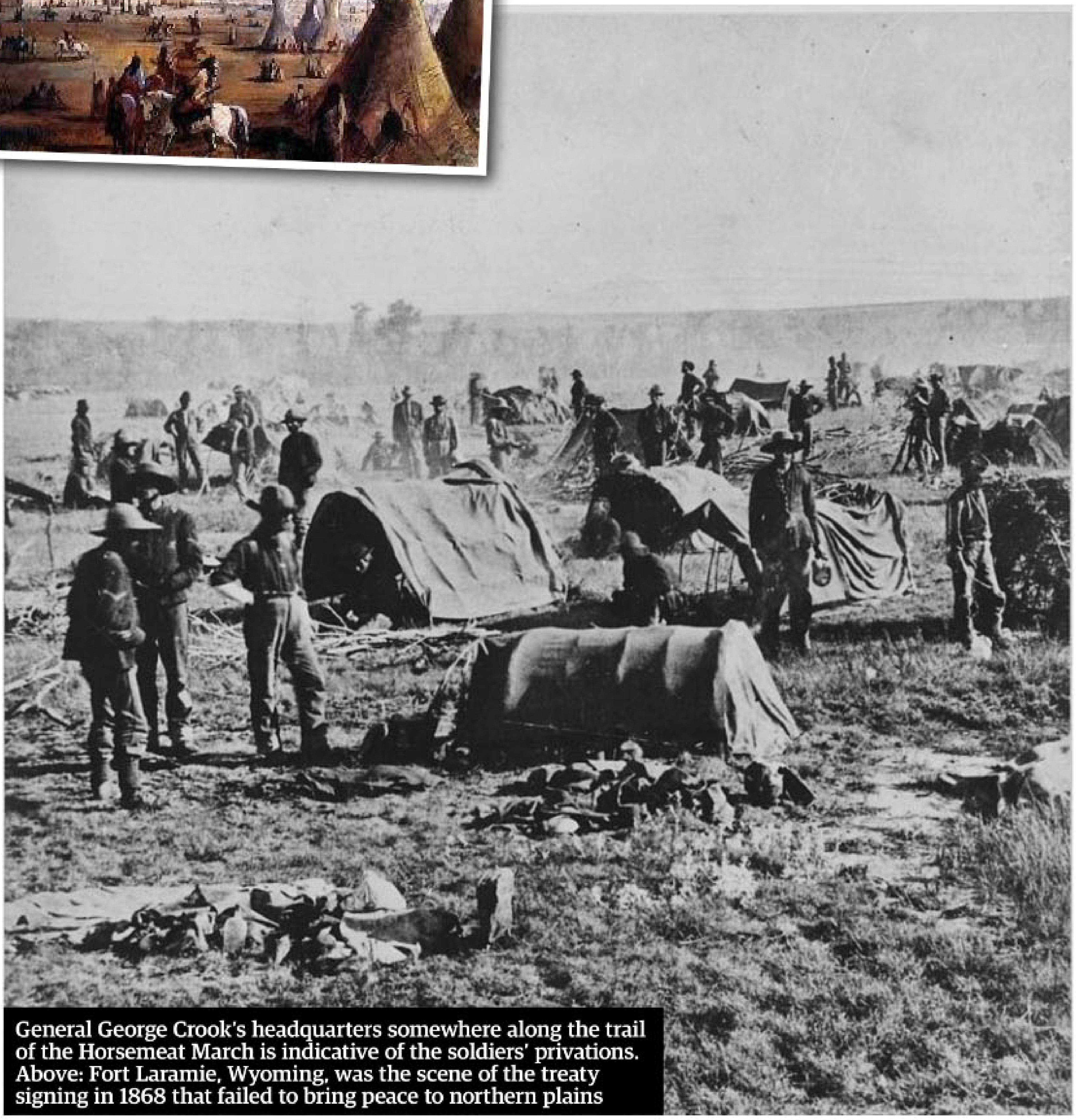
Six weeks after Sheridan's directive, General Crook sent Colonel Joseph J Reynolds and six companies of the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Regiments, 400 troopers strong, in the first of nine separate forays against the renegades. On 17 March, Reynolds struck a Northern Cheyenne settlement of approximately 65 lodges on the Powder River in southeastern Montana. Mistaking them for Sioux, Reynolds attacked at first light. After burning the village, the cavalrymen were quickly forced to retreat as a strong counterattack inflicted numerous casualties. Reynolds was later court-martialed for his apparently inept command during the fight, which left several dead and wounded troopers on the field.

In the early spring, a three-pronged operation began with Crook leading a column north from Fort Fetterman in the Dakota Territory while a second force under Colonel John Gibbon struck out from Fort Ellis in the Montana Territory, and General Alfred Terry left Fort Abraham Lincoln with a large contingent of troopers, including the entire 7th Cavalry Regiment under Custer. If successful, their manoeuvres would trap the hostile Natives between their converging columns. On 17 June, Crook engaged a larger force of Sioux and Northern Cheyenne under Crazy Horse along Rosebud Creek in Montana. The six-hour battle left approximately 60 cavalrymen and as many as 100 Natives dead or wounded. Crook was stopped cold. Meanwhile, Terry detached Custer to scout the valleys of the Rosebud and the Bighorn River. On 25 June, Custer came to grief at the Little Bighorn, overwhelmed by a force of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho in what came to be known as his legendary "Last Stand."

The Indian Appropriations Act stopped food deliveries to reservations until fighting ended

Stunned by the shocking defeat at the Little Bighorn, Crook advanced once again a few days later, briefly joining forces with the remainder of Terry's command. No appreciable contact was made with the Natives, and Crook turned south in search of provisions. As autumn closed in, Crook's fruitless foray became known as the 'Horsemeat March'. His cavalrymen were forced to kill and eat their spent mounts. On 9 September, he happened upon a small camp of Sioux and Cheyenne at Slim





General George Crook's headquarters somewhere along the trail of the Horsemeat March is indicative of the soldiers' privations. Above: Fort Laramie, Wyoming, was the scene of the treaty signing in 1868 that failed to bring peace to northern plains

The last major conflict with the Sioux was the Ghost Dance War

After the Battle of Slim Buttes, cavalrymen found that their opponents had participated in Custer's Last Stand

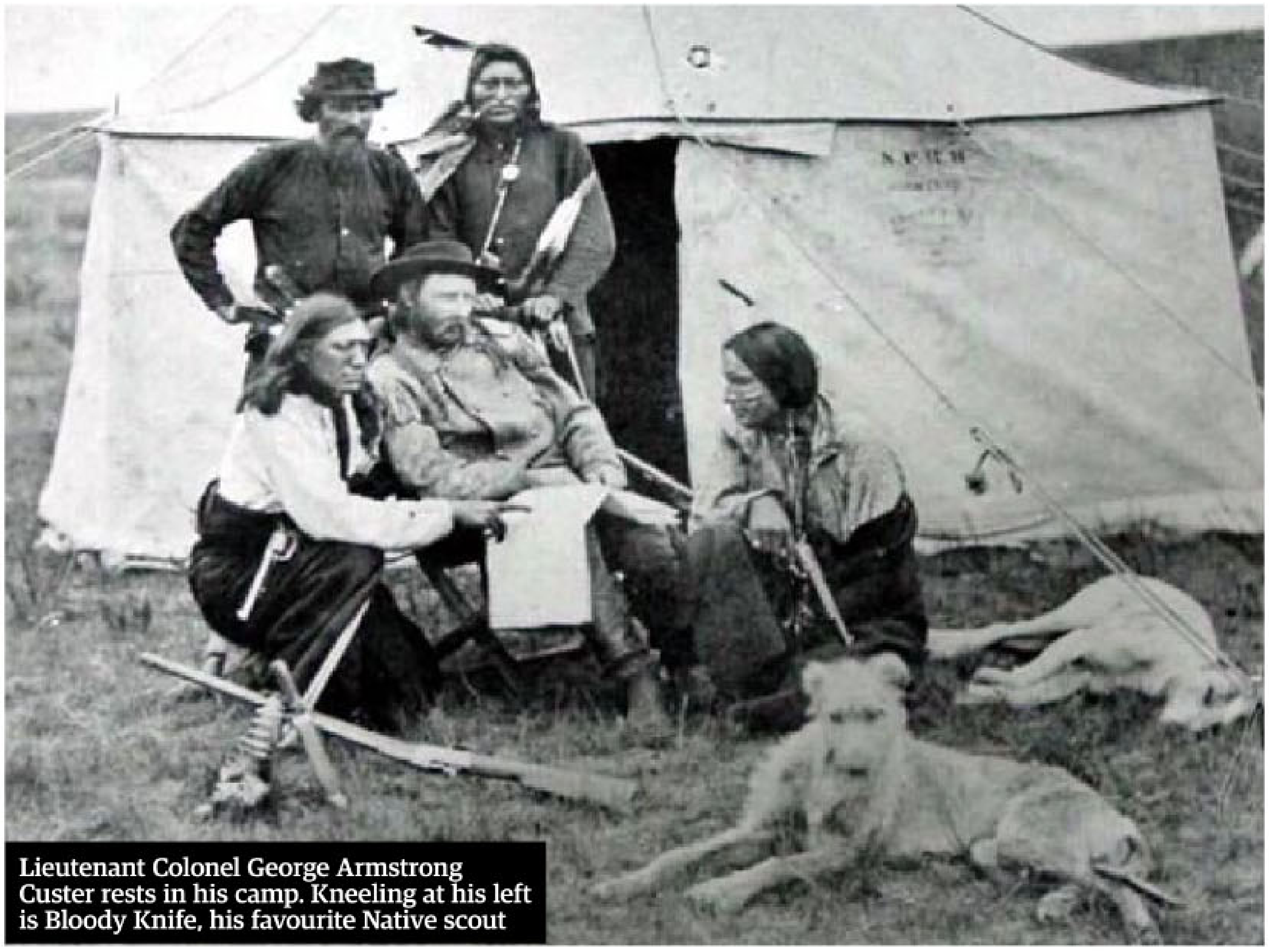
Buttes, within the boundaries of the Sioux reservation. After pillaging the village and burning the lodges, Crook's troopers killed a number of Natives and compelled the survivors to surrender. Meanwhile, Sitting Bull's loyal warriors raided wagon trains filled with supplies along the Yellowstone River, and cavalry under Colonel Nelson Miles gave chase but failed to corner the marauders. By the end of October, though, several hundred Natives had surrendered alongside the riverbank.

Days earlier Colonel Ranald Mackenzie had led the 4th Cavalry Regiment out of Camp Robinson in the Nebraska Territory. On 25 November, the horse soldiers destroyed a large Northern Cheyenne village and defeated a band of warriors led by Dull Knife and Little Wolf at the Battle on the Red Fork in Wyoming. In early December, Lieutenant Frank Baldwin and a contingent of cavalry caught the tail of Sitting Bull's weakening column as it crossed the Missouri River, fighting a brief engagement. Soon Sitting Bull led his people north across the Canadian frontier.

With the prospect of a hard winter looming, Colonel Miles advanced to the valley of the Tongue River in Montana, establishing a post that later became Fort Keogh. On 8 January 1877, Miles tangled with Crazy Horse in the Battle of Wolf Mountain. After several hours of fighting, Crazy Horse withdrew and the battle ended in a tactical draw. A wave of surrender overtures followed as several delegations of Sioux and Cheyenne left their reservations temporarily and convinced some groups of Natives to surrender. Within days, followers of Crazy Horse, Touch The Clouds, Roman Nose, Dull Knife, and Standing Elk began to filter away from their camps and toward the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies in the Nebraska Territory. The agencies were depots constructed for the distribution of food, clothing, and other essentials under the terms of the Fort Laramie Treaty.

A diehard band of Sioux led by Lame Deer continued to resist, and the last major engagement of the Great Sioux War occurred on 7 May at the Battle of Little Muddy Creek. Miles attacked the Indian encampment in the early morning, and an attempt to negotiate surrender terms deteriorated quickly into a close-quarter fight. Lame Deer was killed along with up to 13 other Natives and four soldiers. For three more months, the cavalrymen chased down stragglers and holdouts. With a skirmish along the Little Missouri River on 4 July 1877, the war finally sputtered to a close.

Stirrings against the white man's breaches of its treaties never completely subsided; however, the Native Americans of the northern plains saw their way of life change forever.



Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer rests in his camp. Kneeling at his left is Bloody Knife, his favourite Native scout

Sioux Leader Red Cloud

Red Cloud chose not to join the Native Americans who fought the US Army during the Great Sioux War

Although he is remembered often as a chief, Red Cloud had no formal claim to the title. However, he earned the respect of his people and of his adversaries. Born in the Nebraska Territory near the forks of the Platte River in 1822, and he was raised in the home of his maternal uncle, Old Chief Smoke. As a young man, Red Cloud gained notoriety as a brave warrior in combat against the rival Crow, Shoshone, Ute, and Pawnee tribes.

In 1865, the US Army began to build a string of forts along the Bozeman Trail through Sioux lands in the Wyoming and Montana Territories. Alarmed by the threat of white settlement, Red Cloud staged a series of raids against the forts. In December 1866, he led an allied force of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors that massacred 80 soldiers and civilian scouts under Captain William Fetterman near Fort Phil Kearny, Wyoming. The so-called Red Cloud's War was the most successful war fought by Native Americans against the US Army. When the conflict ended in 1868, the Fort Laramie Treaty gained concessions for the Native Americans. Red Cloud remained a controversial spokesman for his people and died at the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1909.

©Wiki; NARA, Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs Division

SITTING BULL

A Sioux chief and spiritual leader determined to protect traditional ways of life

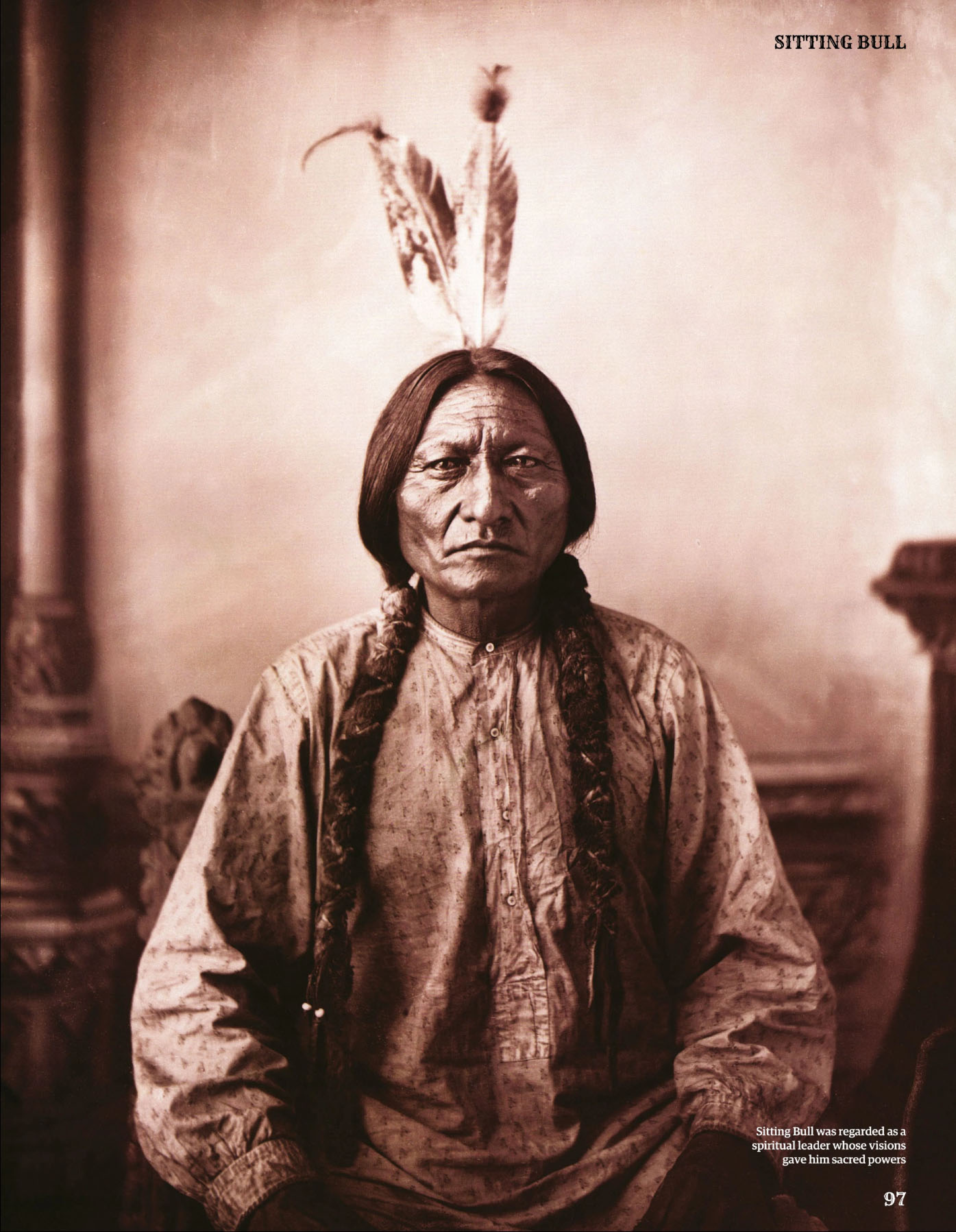
After two days of fierce fighting near the Little Bighorn River on the plains of eastern Montana in 1876, 600 men led by George Armstrong Custer were defeated by a confederation of 3,000 warriors from Native American tribes. Custer himself was killed, as were two of his brothers, a nephew and a brother-in-law. The total US casualty count was 268 dead and 55 injured. For Lakota chief and holy man Sitting Bull, this was a great victory in the violent and desperate struggle for the Sioux tribes' survival on the North American Great Plains. It was also the realisation of a vision the medicine man had experienced at a ceremony not three months earlier.

Throughout the 19th century, native Sioux tribes had been pushed further and further west as white settlers expanded into the American heartland from the colonies on the eastern seaboard. The Great Sioux wars of the 1870s culminated in the Battle of the Little Bighorn, where Custer's infamous last stand took place. The natives saw the battle as their last chance to save their homelands and they fought with desperation and determination. "The whites want a war and we will give it to them", said Sitting Bull. After decades of seeing tribes lose their ancestral land to white men and being forced to live on government controlled reservations, the tribes united in their struggle for survival under the leadership of Sitting Bull, who remained defiant toward American military power and contemptuous of American promises.

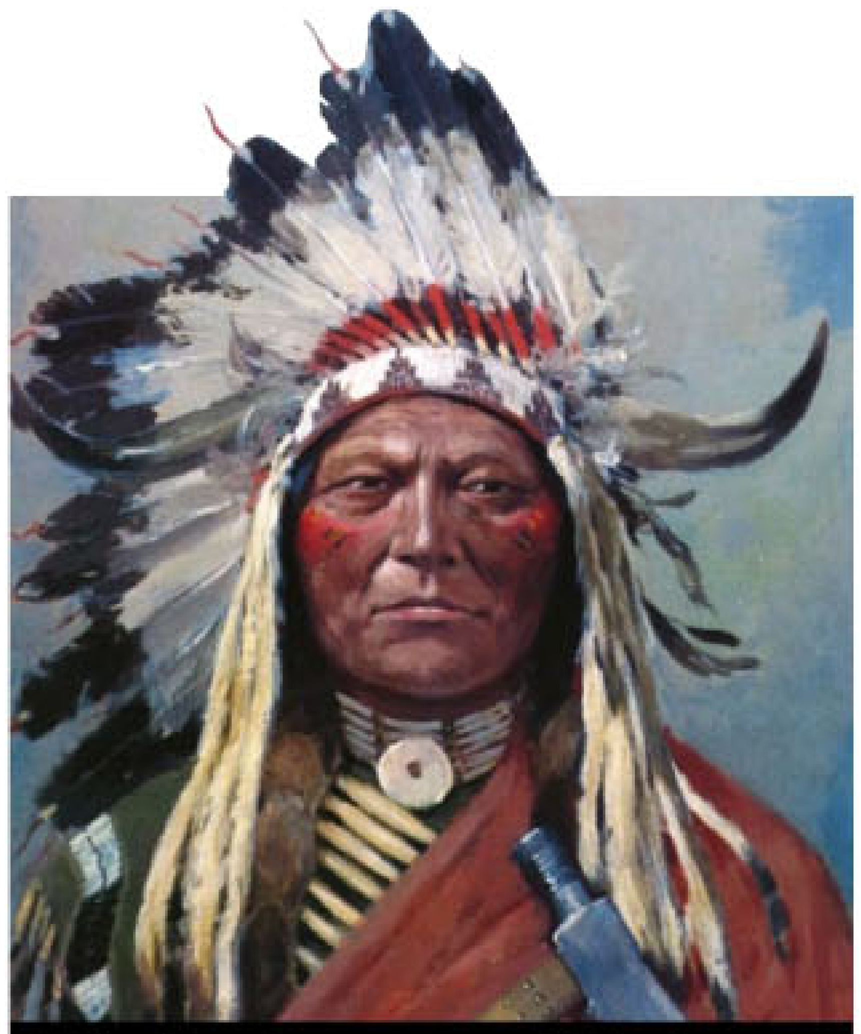
Born on the Grand River in present-day South Dakota, Sitting Bull was originally named Slow by his chieftain father because he was always very careful and slow to take action as a young child. Slow grew up as a typical child in the Lakota Sioux tribe. He learned how to ride horses, shoot with a bow and hunt buffalo, and he dreamt of one day becoming a great warrior. A scout who met Sitting Bull when he was still a boy described him in a later account as "a boy of rather stocky appearance, not 'straight as an arrow' like the traditional Indian. He was fearless under all circumstances, a magnificent rider, an accurate shot and capable of enduring an extraordinary amount of fatigue."

At 14, Slow joined his first war party, taking part in a battle against the Crow tribe, where he bravely charged a warrior and knocked him down. When the party returned to camp, Slow's father gave him the name Sitting Bull in honour of his bravery. It was a name he would live up to throughout his life.

Because his tribe lived and hunted north of the early routes of western travel, Sitting Bull had little contact with white men until the 1862 Santee Sioux uprising, an armed conflict between the US and several bands of the eastern Sioux. The defeated



Sitting Bull was regarded as a spiritual leader whose visions gave him sacred powers



Native Americans were rounded up in reservations by the American government

What he was fighting against

Indian reservations

Toward the end of the 19th century, following decades of westward expansion, the US signed treaties with surrendering Native Americans or conquered those who resisted encroachment into their homelands. In exchange for large tracts of land and the valuable natural resources they contained, the government agreed to provide reservations, off-limits to new white settlers.

The end of traditions

Beside the moral problem of depriving a people of life on their historic land, many issues plagued the reservations. Nomadic tribes, now confined, lost their means of subsistence. Farmers found themselves with land unsuitable for agriculture and hostile tribes were often forced into the same areas. The results were disastrous.

Driven to war

After treaties were made with the Plains Indians in 1861, white miners were able to cross the Great Plains by using the Bozeman Trail, with the US Army building forts along the trail to protect them. The trail ran through the Sioux' buffalo hunting grounds, making their traditional way of life almost impossible. The Sioux responded with war.

Loss of more land

In 1887, the Dawes General Allotment Act was passed. It tried to weaken traditional bonds of Indian society by making land ownership private rather than shared. The government broke up reservation land and distributed it to individuals, selling the remainder. It reduced the remaining Native American-controlled land by about two-thirds.

Battle of Wounded Knee

When Sioux tribes protested, the US Army shot and killed at least 150 near Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota in 1890. Because of this massacre, The Ghost Dance, a religious movement prophesying the return of buffalo herds and disappearance of the settlers, gradually died out.

Sioux were driven west to the plains where Sitting Bull, now a chief himself, heard what life was like on a government-controlled reservation, and began to understand that pacts with white men rarely lasted. Desperate for his people to retain their culture, traditions and sacred lands, Sitting Bull resolved to keep his tribe away from the white man's world and never to sign a treaty that would force them to live on a reservation.

Sitting Bull's disdain for treaties and reservation life soon attracted a large following, not only from the Sioux but from the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes as well. Widely respected for his bravery and insight, he became head chief of the Lakota nation from around 1868. In early encounters with US soldiers encroaching on native territory, Sitting Bull learned their ways of fighting, strengths and weaknesses. He combined this analytical approach with raw courage. Once, during a battle with soldiers protecting railroad workers on the Yellowstone River, Sitting Bull led four other warriors out between the lines, sat calmly sharing a pipe with them as bullets buzzed around, before casually walking away.

However, the relative peace and tentative expansion of territory by white settlers was shattered in 1874 when gold was discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota, an area sacred to many tribes and placed off-limits to white settlement by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. Prospectors eager to make their fortune rushed to the Black Hills in spite of the treaty, provoking the Lakota to defend their sacred land. The US ordered all Sioux that lived outside the Indian Reservation to move inside it. Sitting Bull refused, saying that reservations were like prisons and he would not be "shut up in a corral."

As the US forces began to hunt down the Sioux, Sitting Bull formed a war camp. In 1876, as three columns of federal troops moved into the area the Indian chief summoned the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes to his camp on Rosebud Creek in Montana Territory. There he led them in the sun dance ritual, offering prayers to Wakan Tanka, their Great Spirit, and slashing his arms 100 times as a sign of sacrifice. During this ceremony, he had a vision in which he saw soldiers falling into the Lakota camp like grasshoppers falling from the sky; the prophesy would become a reality at Little Bighorn three months later.

Having moved their encampment to the Little Bighorn and gained the support of more warriors, the tribes were attacked on 25 June by the 7th Cavalry under Custer, whose badly outnumbered troops first rushed the encampment, as if in fulfilment of Sitting Bull's vision, and then made a last doomed stand on a nearby ridge, where they were destroyed. The event marked the most decisive Native American victory and the worst US Army defeat in the long Plains Indian War. The demise of Custer and his men outraged many white Americans and confirmed to them their image of the Indians as wild and bloodthirsty. The US government increased its efforts to subdue the tribes and sent thousands more cavalrymen to the area. Over the next year, they relentlessly pursued the Lakota, forcing chief after chief to surrender. But Sitting Bull remained defiant. In 1877 he led his band across the border into Canada, beyond the reach of the US Army, and when he was offered a pardon in exchange for settling on a reservation angrily refused.

However, living in a land without buffalo was almost impossible and finding it difficult to feed his people, Sitting Bull finally came south to surrender after four long years. He was sent to Standing Rock Reservation, and when his reception there raised fears that he might inspire a fresh uprising, was sent further down the Missouri River to Fort Randall, where he and his followers were held for nearly two years as prisoners of war. Finally, in 1883, Sitting Bull re-joined his tribe at Standing Rock Reservation. Those in charge were determined to deny the great chief any special privileges, even forcing him to work in the fields, hoe in hand. But Sitting Bull still knew his own authority, and when a delegation of US

DEFINING MOMENT

Forging resolve

Sitting Bull is one of the defenders when General Alfred Sully uses artillery against a Teton encampment at Killdeer Mountain. After the event he forms his resolve to keep his people away from the white man's world and never to sign a treaty that will force them to leave their land and live on a government controlled reservation.

July 1864

Timeline

1831

Born to the Lakota tribe
Sitting Bull or, in the Sioux language, Tatanka Yotanka, is born in the Grand River Valley in what is now South Dakota. His chieftain father, Jumping Bull, names him Slow as a child for his thoughtful and reserved nature.

1845

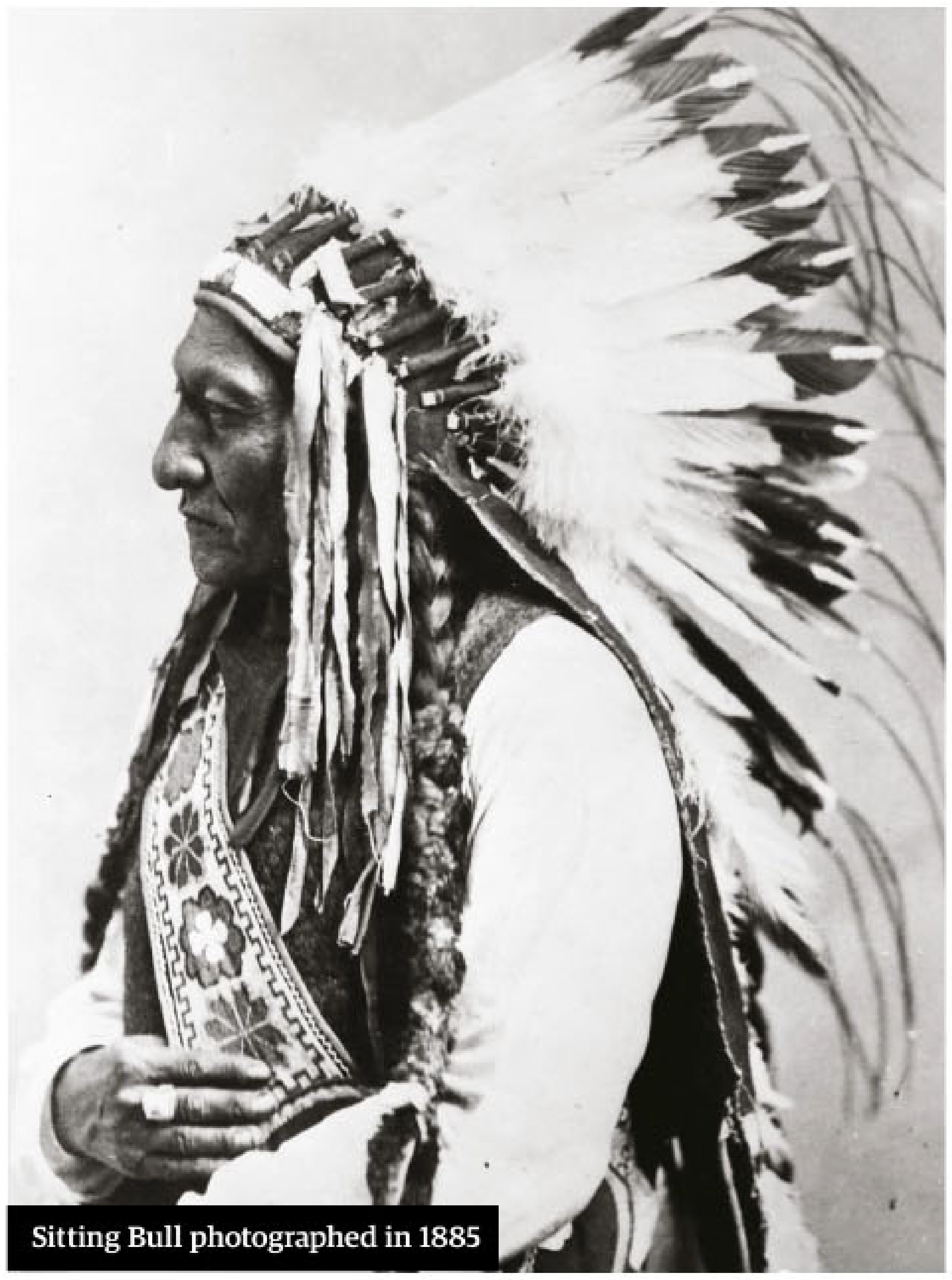
First battle
Sitting Bull first goes into battle in a raid on another tribe, the Crow. After the battle he earns his now-famous adult name for his bravery. 'Sitting Bull' refers to a recalcitrant bull sitting on its haunches.

1862

Learning about the white man
Because the Lakota Sioux live and hunt north of the early routes of western travel, Sitting Bull has little contact with whites until the Santee Sioux uprising in Minnesota.

1865

Gaining experience
Beginning in the summer, columns of US soldiers repeatedly invade the Powder River country. Sitting Bull has occasional encounters with them, learning their ways of fighting, their strengths and weaknesses.


Sitting Bull photographed in 1885

senators came to discuss opening part of the reservation to white settlers, he spoke forcefully, though in vain, against their plan.

Two years later Sitting Bull was allowed to leave the reservation to join Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, earning $50 a week for riding once around the arena, in addition to whatever he could charge for his autograph and picture. There he met President Grover Cleveland as well as the famous sharpshooter Annie Oakley, who said the Sioux warrior "made a great pet of me." However, life on the road was unpleasant with crowds often hissing, while the newspapers termed Sitting Bull "as mild mannered a man as ever cut a throat or scalped a helpless woman." He stayed only four months with the show, unable to tolerate white society or the damage to his pride any longer.

Returning to Standing Rock, he lived in a cabin on the Grand River, near his birthplace. Soon after his return, he had another mystical vision. This time he saw a meadowlark alight on a hillock beside him and heard it say, "Your own people, Lakotas, will kill you."

In the autumn of 1890, a Lakota named Kicking Bear came to Sitting Bull with news of the Ghost Dance, a ceremony that promised to rid the land of white people. Lakota had already adopted the ceremony at the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations, and Indian agents there had called for troops to bring the growing movement under control. At Standing Rock, the authorities feared that Sitting Bull, revered as a spiritual leader, would join the Ghost Dancers and so sent 43 Lakota policemen to bring him in. Before dawn on 15 December 1890, the policemen burst into Sitting Bull's cabin and dragged him outside, where his followers were gathering to protect him. In the ensuing gunfight, one of the Lakota policemen put a bullet through Sitting Bull's head.

Chief Sitting Bull is remembered among the Lakota not only as an inspirational leader but also as a loving father, a gifted singer, a man always affable and friendly toward others and whose deep religious faith gave him prophetic insight and lent special power to his prayers. He inherited from his father the chieftainship of a part of the Sioux tribe, but his remarkable ascendancy over other tribes was thanks to his spiritual leadership, his talents as a politician and an unshakable determination to preserve his people's way of life.

DEFINING MOMENT

Battle of the Little Bighorn

Determined to resist US efforts to force them onto reservations, Natives under the leadership of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse wipe out Lieutenant Colonel George Custer and much of his 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. It is the Natives' greatest victory and the army's worst defeat in the long and bloody Plains Indian War.

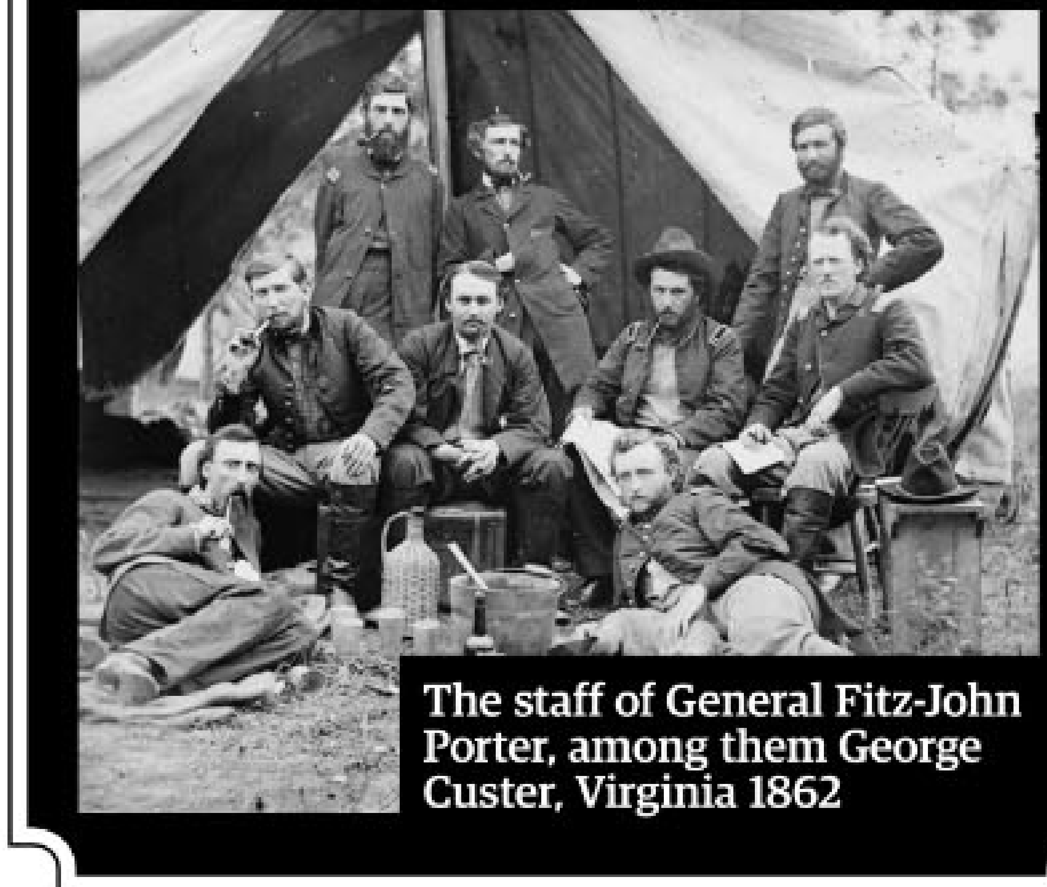
June 1876

★ How he defeated Custer ★

Lieutenant Colonel George Custer is remembered for his famous 'last stand' along the Little Bighorn River. Born in Ohio in 1839, Custer graduated at the bottom of his military academy class and was court-marshalled for not obeying his duties as an officer of the guard. With the Civil War raging, though, he was not punished. Custer proved himself a worthy officer in that brutal war and aged just 23 was the youngest officer ever to make the rank of general. However, after the war he was stripped of his commission.

Having enlisted in the regular Army in 1866, Custer only strengthened his reputation for not following orders. In 1868, he led an attack on a band of Southern Cheyenne, even though the tribe had given in to the demands of the US government and were flying the white flag of truce on the morning of Custer's attack.

In 1876, Custer was sent to lead a force to defeat Lakota Sioux and Northern Cheyenne warriors. On 25 June, Custer's scouts told him that a gigantic Indian village lay in the valley of the Little Bighorn River. Dismissing the scouts' claim that the village was extraordinarily large as exaggerated, Custer split his force in order to attack the encampment from two sides. However, he had miscalculated the number of Indian warriors and the depth of the river he had to cross. It took less than an hour for the Native Americans' arrows and bullets to wipe out General Custer and his men.


The staff of General Fitz-John Porter, among them George Custer, Virginia 1862

1868

Increasing influence
Another Lakota leader, Red Cloud, signs the Fort Laramie Treaty, and then agrees to lead his people to life on a reservation. In the aftermath, Red Cloud's influence wanes and Sitting Bull's grows in turn.

1874

Plains gold rush
Gold is discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The US wants access to the gold without interference from Natives. They order all Sioux living outside the Sioux Reservation to move inside it. Sitting Bull refuses.

1881

Return and surrender
Having fled over the border to Canada after the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1877, Sitting Bull surrenders to the US and is held as a prisoner of war for a time at Fort Randall in South Dakota Territory.

1883

Living on a reservation
Sitting Bull is permitted to live on Standing Rock Reservation, where he continues to use his influence among the Native Americans to attempt to keep Sioux lands from being taken by the government.

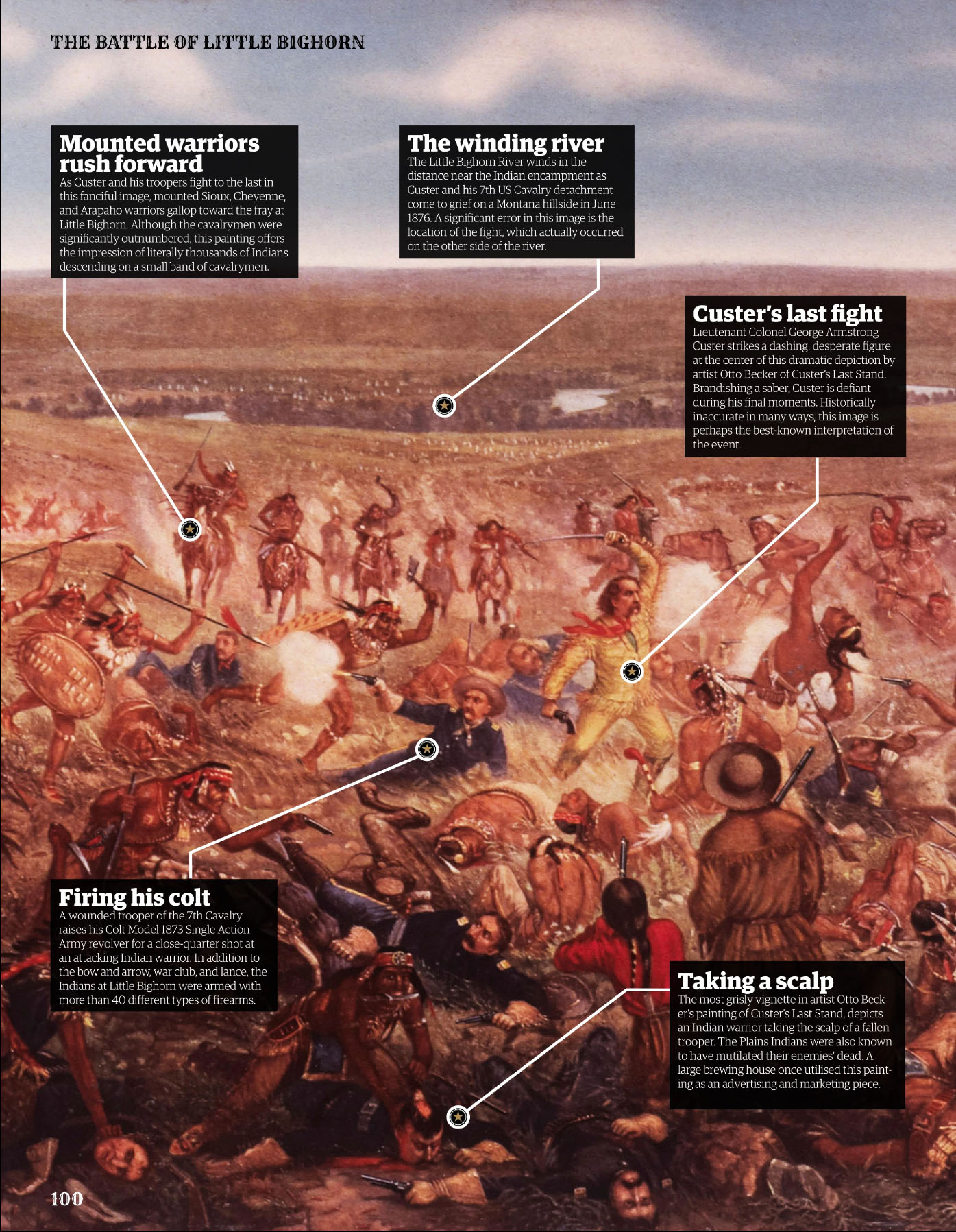
1885

Travelling show
Sitting Bull travels for a season with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show. However, he can only tolerate white company for a few months, due to their hostile behaviour toward him, and soon returns to the reservation.

1890

Death of a leader
A US Indian agent at Fort Yates fears the Lakota leader will flee the reservation. Eight policemen and seven of Sitting Bull's supporters are killed in an ensuing fight, along with the great man himself.

© Alamy, Thinkstock, Wiki NARA, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division



Mounted warriors rush forward

As Custer and his troopers fight to the last in this fanciful image, mounted Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors gallop toward the fray at Little Bighorn. Although the cavalrymen were significantly outnumbered, this painting offers the impression of literally thousands of Indians descending on a small band of cavalrymen.

The winding river

The Little Bighorn River winds in the distance near the Indian encampment as Custer and his 7th US Cavalry detachment come to grief on a Montana hillside in June 1876. A significant error in this image is the location of the fight, which actually occurred on the other side of the river.

Custer's last fight

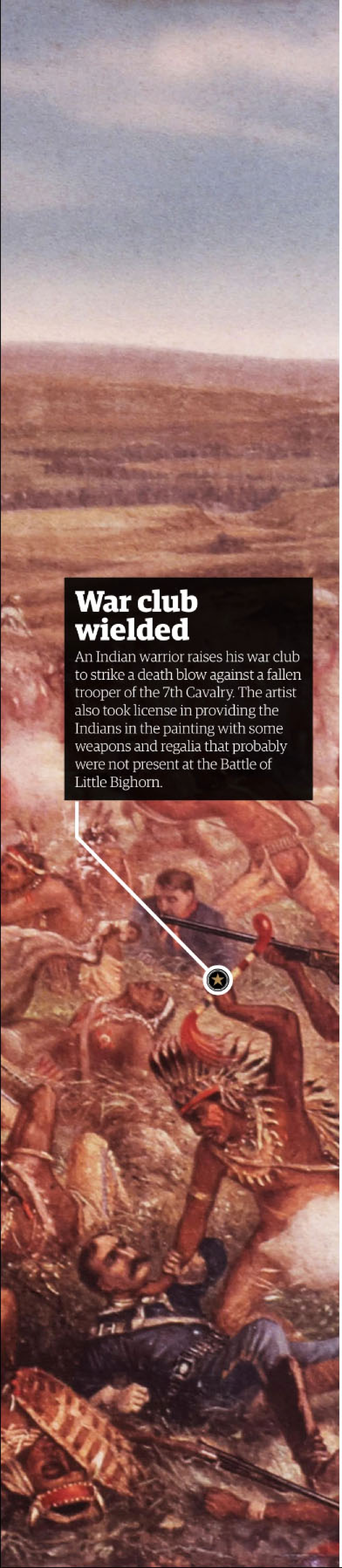
Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer strikes a dashing, desperate figure at the center of this dramatic depiction by artist Otto Becker of Custer's Last Stand. Brandishing a saber, Custer is defiant during his final moments. Historically inaccurate in many ways, this image is perhaps the best-known interpretation of the event.

Firing his colt

A wounded trooper of the 7th Cavalry raises his Colt Model 1873 Single Action Army revolver for a close-quarter shot at an attacking Indian warrior. In addition to the bow and arrow, war club, and lance, the Indians at Little Bighorn were armed with more than 40 different types of firearms.

Taking a scalp

The most grisly vignette in artist Otto Becker's painting of Custer's Last Stand, depicts an Indian warrior taking the scalp of a fallen trooper. The Plains Indians were also known to have mutilated their enemies' dead. A large brewing house once utilised this painting as an advertising and marketing piece.



War club wielded

An Indian warrior raises his war club to strike a death blow against a fallen trooper of the 7th Cavalry. The artist also took license in providing the Indians in the painting with some weapons and regalia that probably were not present at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN

MONTANA TERRITORY 25-26 JUNE 1876

In November 1868, the great Sioux chief Red Cloud agreed to a treaty with the United States. Red Cloud consented to relocate the Sioux to a vast reservation in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory, land sacred to the tribe. However, some Sioux factions refused to relocate, particularly since white settlers regularly encroached on lands already promised to the Sioux and other Native tribes. Among these were the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who joined Sioux led by Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and other leaders in a strong defiance of the treaty. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills in 1874 quickened the pace of white settlement.

By the summer of 1876, the US Army was charged with bringing the renegade Natives to heel, eliminating the threat to the growing tide of settlement. A contingent of cavalry and infantry was dispatched to the Montana Territory under the command of Generals George Crook and Alfred Terry and Colonel John Gibbon. Their plan was to trap the Natives and either annihilate or compel them retire to the reservation.

By mid-June, Crook had been fought to a standstill. He halted to regroup while Terry and Gibbon, still hoping to trap their adversaries, headed for the valley of the Bighorn and Little Bighorn Rivers. The 7th Cavalry Regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel George A Custer, was detached and ordered to proceed along the Rosebud River.

Prior to departing Terry's command, Custer was offered the firepower of the Gatling gun detachment of the 20th Infantry Regiment. He declined, saying the guns would slow him down. He was also offered two additional cavalry companies but rejected these as well, confidently stating that the 7th Cavalry was capable of handling whatever trouble might arise.

When a huge Native encampment was spotted along the banks of the Little Bighorn on the morning of 25 June, Custer issued questionable orders, dividing his command of fewer than 700 troopers into four groups. Fearing that the element of surprise would be lost, he further discarded plans to attack the following day and impetuously ordered an immediate assault.

With 177 men, Major Marcus Reno made first contact with the enemy at approximately 3 p.m. A strong Native force attacked in turn and pushed Reno's dismounted troopers through scrub and brambles to a hillside, where they were pinned down. Shortly after Reno engaged, Custer sent his five companies toward the other end of the Native encampment. Crazy Horse reversed direction and completed an envelopment of Custer's force, which was driven northward. Meanwhile, 115 troopers under Captain Frederick Benteen joined Reno and fought off repeated Native assaults. Their survivors retired after another day of fighting. Custer fought a running battle with his pursuers. His five companies were finally surrounded on high ground about five kilometres from Reno's position and annihilated.

Custer himself was among the 260 troopers and scouts killed in the battle, which has lived on in popular culture as Custer's Last Stand. 55 more soldiers were wounded. About 130 Natives were killed and 160 wounded.

Although they had prevailed at the Little Bighorn, the Natives were overwhelmed and defeated within a year.

US 7TH CAVALRY REGIMENT

TROOPS 700
CAVALRY 700

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE A. CUSTER

LEADER

Shown above in 1865, George A Custer was promoted to the temporary rank of brigadier general during the Civil War.

Strengths Custer was well-known for his bravery and fighting spirit

Weakness Custer was impetuous and prone to taking risks

7TH CAVALRY REGIMENT

KEY UNIT

The veteran 7th Cavalry Regiment followed its commander, George Custer, to destruction at the Little Bighorn

Strengths Mobile, quick-strike force

Weakness Relatively lightly armed and equipped for sustained combat

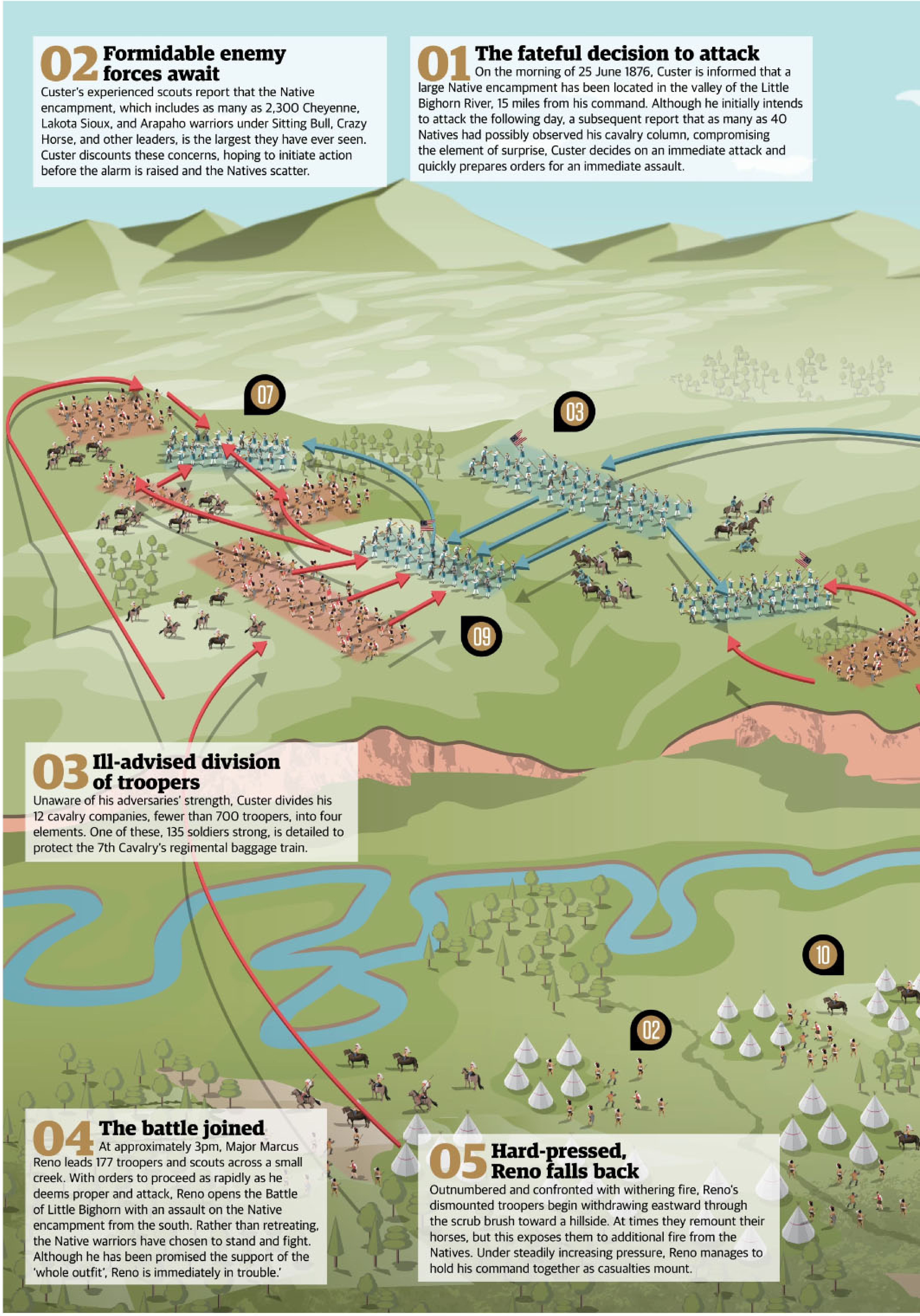
SPRINGFIELD MODEL 1873 CARBINE

KEY WEAPON

A 'trapdoor' rifle, the Model 1873 utilised a hinged breechblock

Strengths Short carbine easier transport than standard model (pictured); excellent range

Weakness Low rate of fire due to single shot chamber



01 The fateful decision to attack

On the morning of 25 June 1876, Custer is informed that a large Native encampment has been located in the valley of the Little Bighorn River, 15 miles from his command. Although he initially intends to attack the following day, a subsequent report that as many as 40 Natives had possibly observed his cavalry column, compromising the element of surprise, Custer decides on an immediate attack and quickly prepares orders for an immediate assault.

02 Formidable enemy forces await

Custer's experienced scouts report that the Native encampment, which includes as many as 2,300 Cheyenne, Lakota Sioux, and Arapaho warriors under Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and other leaders, is the largest they have ever seen. Custer discounts these concerns, hoping to initiate action before the alarm is raised and the Natives scatter.

03 Ill-advised division of troopers

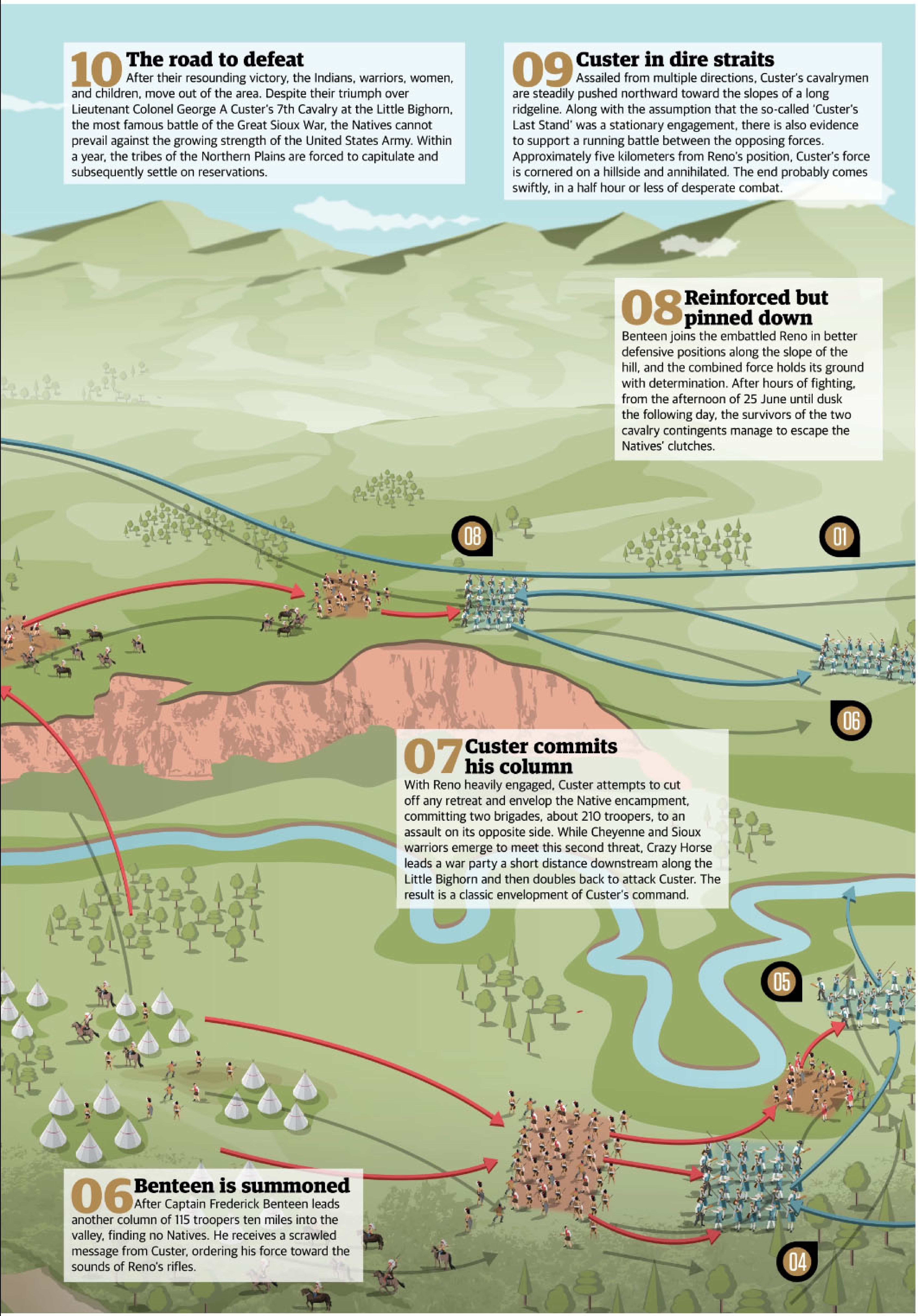
Unaware of his adversaries' strength, Custer divides his 12 cavalry companies, fewer than 700 troopers, into four elements. One of these, 135 soldiers strong, is detailed to protect the 7th Cavalry's regimental baggage train.

04 The battle joined

At approximately 3pm, Major Marcus Reno leads 177 troopers and scouts across a small creek. With orders to proceed as rapidly as he deems proper and attack, Reno opens the Battle of Little Bighorn with an assault on the Native encampment from the south. Rather than retreating, the Native warriors have chosen to stand and fight. Although he has been promised the support of the 'whole outfit', Reno is immediately in trouble.'

05 Hard-pressed, Reno falls back

Outnumbered and confronted with withering fire, Reno's dismounted troopers begin withdrawing eastward through the scrub brush toward a hillside. At times they remount their horses, but this exposes them to additional fire from the Natives. Under steadily increasing pressure, Reno manages to hold his command together as casualties mount.



10 The road to defeat

After their resounding victory, the Indians, warriors, women, and children, move out of the area. Despite their triumph over Lieutenant Colonel George A Custer's 7th Cavalry at the Little Bighorn, the most famous battle of the Great Sioux War, the Natives cannot prevail against the growing strength of the United States Army. Within a year, the tribes of the Northern Plains are forced to capitulate and subsequently settle on reservations.

09 Custer in dire straits

Assailed from multiple directions, Custer's cavalrymen are steadily pushed northward toward the slopes of a long ridgeline. Along with the assumption that the so-called 'Custer's Last Stand' was a stationary engagement, there is also evidence to support a running battle between the opposing forces. Approximately five kilometers from Reno's position, Custer's force is cornered on a hillside and annihilated. The end probably comes swiftly, in a half hour or less of desperate combat.

08 Reinforced but pinned down

Benteen joins the embattled Reno in better defensive positions along the slope of the hill, and the combined force holds its ground with determination. After hours of fighting, from the afternoon of 25 June until dusk the following day, the survivors of the two cavalry contingents manage to escape the Natives' clutches.

07 Custer commits his column

With Reno heavily engaged, Custer attempts to cut off any retreat and envelop the Native encampment, committing two brigades, about 210 troopers, to an assault on its opposite side. While Cheyenne and Sioux warriors emerge to meet this second threat, Crazy Horse leads a war party a short distance downstream along the Little Bighorn and then doubles back to attack Custer. The result is a classic envelopment of Custer's command.

06 Benteen is summoned

After Captain Frederick Benteen leads another column of 115 troopers ten miles into the valley, finding no Natives. He receives a scrawled message from Custer, ordering his force toward the sounds of Reno's rifles.

LAKOTA SIOUX, CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO

WARRIORS 2,300
WOMEN & CHILDREN 7,000

CRAZY HORSE

LEADER

Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and others led Natives at Little Bighorn

Strengths Crazy Horse was visionary, spiritual, courageous, and inspirational

Weakness Willing to engage in a war against overwhelming odds

INDIAN WARRIORS

KEY UNIT

Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors pursued the 7th Cavalry on horseback

Strengths Strong-willed, courageous, with great endurance

Weakness Often outgunned and outmanned, though not at Little Bighorn

RIFLES

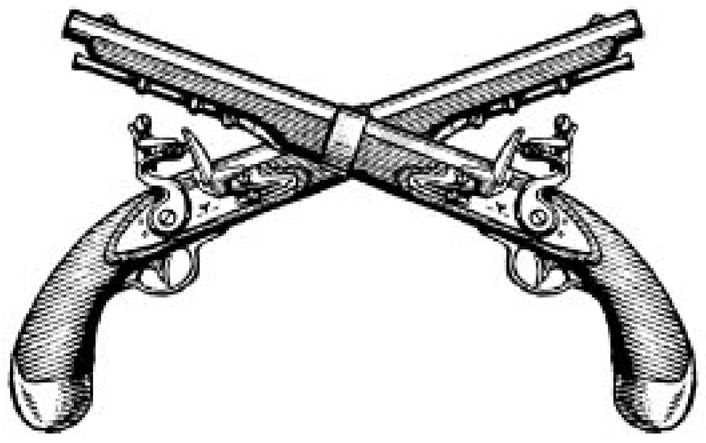
KEY WEAPON

Winchester and Henry repeating rifles provided great firepower

Strengths Rapid rates of fire for repeating rifles

Weakness Shorter range compared to single-shot 7th Cavalry rifles

©Alamy, Illustration: Ed Crooks, Wiki: Gromitsonabarth, Hmaag



THE HUNT FOR BILLY THE KID

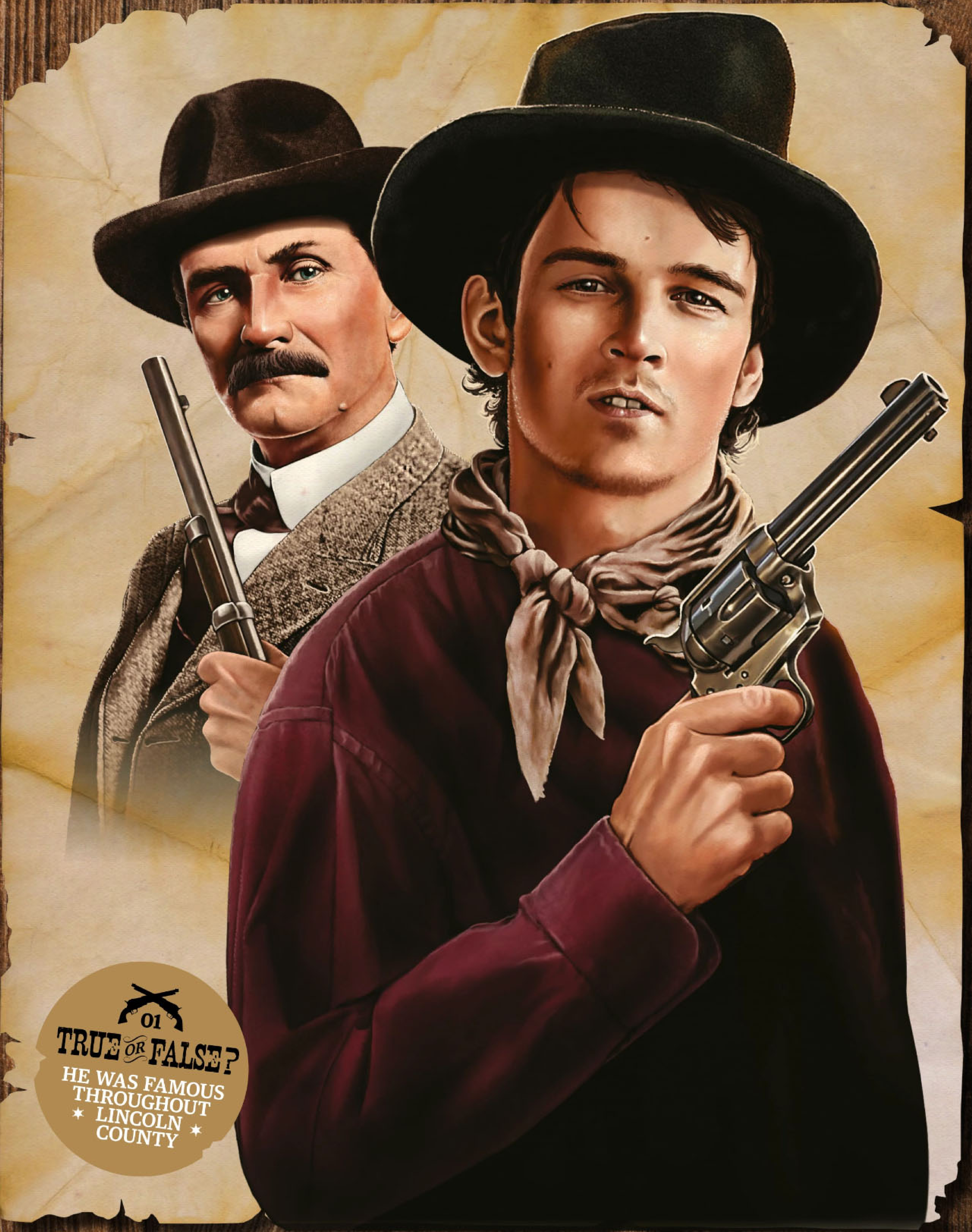
It's the iconic Wild West story and thus, in the 150 years since its making, it has become fraught with embellishment and myth. What was the real history of the hunt that made the legendary lawman Pat Garrett?

By the late 19th century, cartographers had mapped much of the world, and the globe, almost as we know it today, was a well-established fact. To the east, the Victorian Empire had peaked despite being ousted from its interests in the New World colonies a century earlier, and the decades that followed Independence Day had seen a fledgling United States simmer with civil war and lawlessness. In the wake of the British, the new American government had made vast territorial gains, picking up the entire Louisiana region – a huge swathe of grasslands over a million square kilometres – from France's Napoleon Bonaparte for a snip, at just $15 million. Border disputes and infighting followed, but that did not halt the USA's progress from the Great Plains to the coastline of the Golden State.

The boundary of this new nation had spilled westward too rapidly for any population to fill, let alone for the lawmakers of the White House to control. The West was true frontier territory, its people as feral and keen as its unrelenting climate, no place for the fragile. This crucible forged two characters, the outlaw Billy the Kid and sheriff Patrick Floyd Garrett: their independent life stories alone have resonated through generations, but it is Pat's pursuit and the ultimate death of the Kid that has defined them both.

Hollywood has traditionally presented an extremely romanticised notion of this era, so while the stereotypes of sheriff, outlaw, saloon owner, settler, Mexican, cowboy and their ilk can usually be taken with a mere pinch of salt, the black and white morality of the Silver Screen is laughably far from the truth. There was often little to separate lawman from lawless but a small steel star, so we're going to rub away the sepia and journey to New Mexico in late 1880, where Pat Garrett has just been appointed the sheriff of Lincoln County.

Garrett was an imposing six feet three inches of lean gunman and a known deadeye shot. Coupled with his imposing figure and reputation, he made a first-class choice for a visiting detective in the employ of the Treasury Department, Azariah Wild,



01

TRUE OR FALSE?

HE WAS FAMOUS THROUGHOUT LINCOLN COUNTY

The shooting of Billy the Kid solidified Garrett's fame as a lawman and gunman

to help track down the source of $30,000 worth of counterfeit greenbacks that were circulating the county. Garrett himself employed another man – Barney Mason – to bait the two suspected of distributing this currency: ranch owner Dan Dedrick and another, WH West, who had made himself and their intentions clear in a letter that Mason had intercepted. Those intentions were that they would launder the money by buying cattle in Mexico as fast as they could with an assistant, who would unwittingly take the hit in the event that their ruse was discovered. Mason was to be the fall guy. Now that they had the advantage, Garrett instructed Mason to travel to the White Oaks ranch and play along with their nefarious plans.

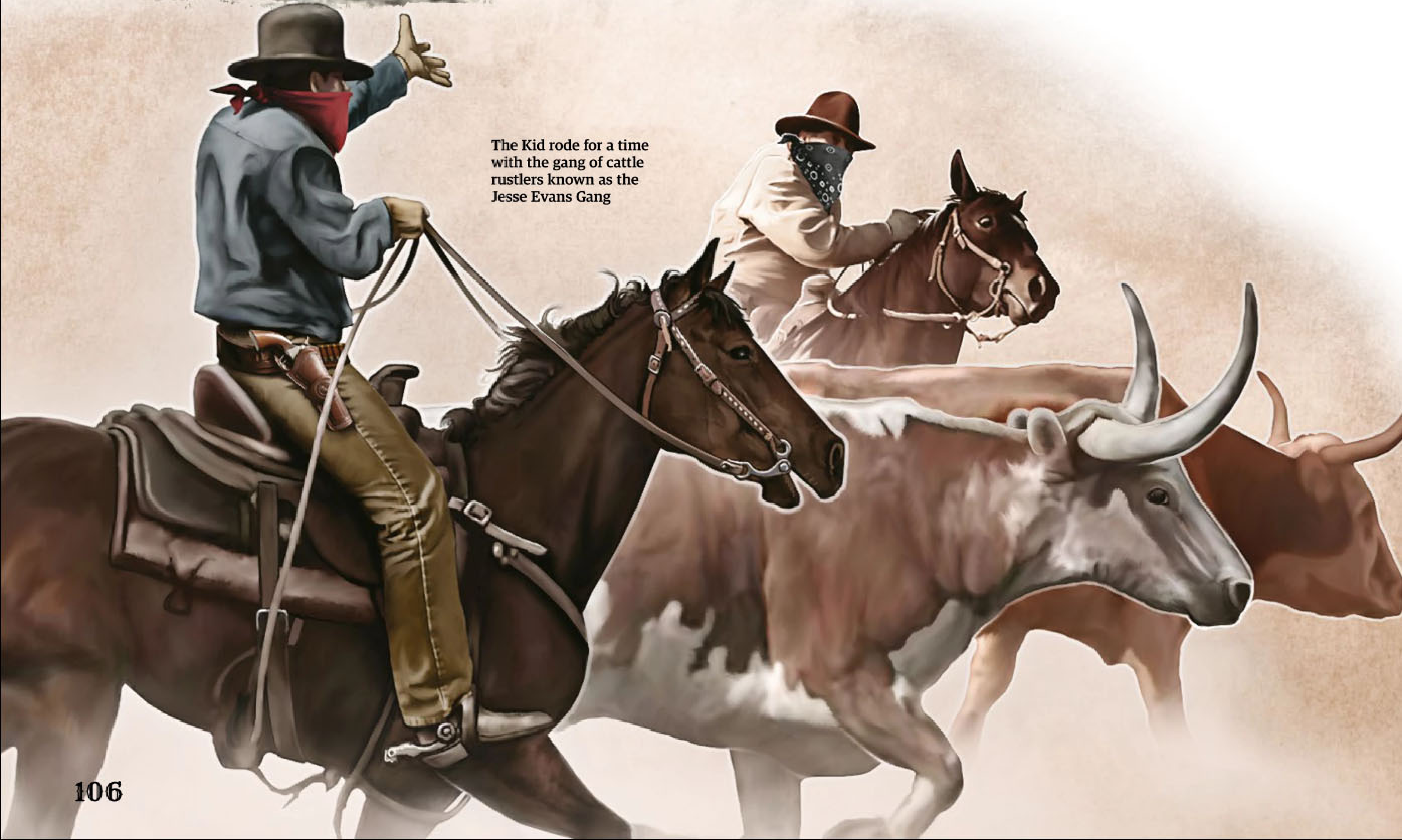
02

TRUE OR FALSE?

HE SURVIVED THE SHOOTOUT ★ WITH PAT ★ GARRETT

In the brisk New Mexico winter, Mason rode out to Dedrick's. There, he ran into three gunslingers on the run from the authorities: Dave Rudabaugh, who had killed a Las Vegas jailer during a break-out; Billy Wilson, another murderer yet to be caught; and the last was none other than Billy the Kid – the unlawful killer who had busted himself out of jail once already, made a living by cattle rustling and gambling, surrounded himself with like-minded outlaws and whose reputation was on the cusp of snowballing towards near mythological status. The attitude of the era was such that a lawman and a wanted man could be trading campfire stories one day, then bullets the next. The Kid and Garrett (who ran his own saloon) were once thought to have gambled together, and Mason was also known to these three – he was, in fact, on friendly terms with them. Thus, both parties made their pleasantries then entered a game of high-stakes mind games, whereby the Kid attempted to ferret out the true nature of Mason's visit (suspecting he had come to ascertain his location and then report to the sheriff) while Mason threw the Kid a red herring, stating that he was there to take in some horses. The Kid didn't buy this ruse. Smelling a rat, he met with Dedrick and his fellow outlaws with the intention of killing Mason, but Dedrick feared the repercussions would ruin his illicit plans, so the Kid relaxed his proverbial itchy trigger finger.

A local posse on the hunt for Billy had been raised and the town of White Oaks was agitated with the news that the outlaw was in the area. The heat was too much for Mason to follow through with his orders without raising suspicion, so he lay low for a few days before returning to report at Garrett's place in Roswell. Shortly after, Garrettt received a letter from Roswell Prison's Captain Lea, detailing the criminal activities of the Kid and his companions in the area. Garrett



The Kid rode for a time with the gang of cattle rustlers known as the Jesse Evans Gang was commissioned as a United States marshal and given a warrant for the arrest of Henry McCarty, aka William H Bonney, aka Billy the Kid, on the charge of murder. The hunt was on. The Kid's days were numbered and on 27 November 1880, the curtain was lifted on one history's most famous Wild West drama.

The new marshal already had a reputation and might have put the fear of God into the common criminal, but he was no fool. The Kid was by now a true desperado, one who had cut his teeth in the revenge killings of the Lincoln County War, and he was more likely to go out in a blaze of glory than he was to lay down his arms and come quietly. Garrett had raised a posse of about a dozen men from the citizens of Roswell and made his way to Fort Sumner to pick up the outlaws' trail, which would lead them to his suspected hideout at Los Portales. The many miles of desert scrub and overgrown track were neither an easy nor uneventful ride, and saw a Kid associate named Tom Foliard flee the posse in a hail of bullets. When the 'hideout' at Los Portales – a hole in a cliff face with a fresh water spring – turned up nothing more than a few head of cattle, the posse fed and watered themselves before returning to Fort Sumner, where Garrett dismissed them. It was not the showdown he had hoped for, but Garrett wasn't the quitting kind.

Over the next few days, Garrett, accompanied by Mason, encountered Sheriff

The Kid is thought to have killed his first victim a few months before his 18th birthday

03

TRUE OR FALSE?

★ HE WAS LEFT-HANDED ★

The Wild West in numbers

The times were hard, but surprisingly, the crimes were nowhere near as bad as they are in the western United States today

3 murders

The highest annual body count for Tombstone, Arizona, happened in 1881, the same year as Wyatt Earp's famous gunfight at the OK Corral

$5-10 million

The biggest value stagecoach shipments in today's equivalent – usually gold bullion

6

The number of bank robberies across 15 states from 1859 to 1900. There weren't many banks and with no cars, it was a lot harder to get away with it back then

45

The number of murders from 1870-85 in five Kansas towns, a lower per capita than today

13 May 1881

Billy the Kid's hanging date set by Lincoln county courts

28

The number of times the outlaw Black Bart robbed stagecoaches in California, making thousands of dollars a year

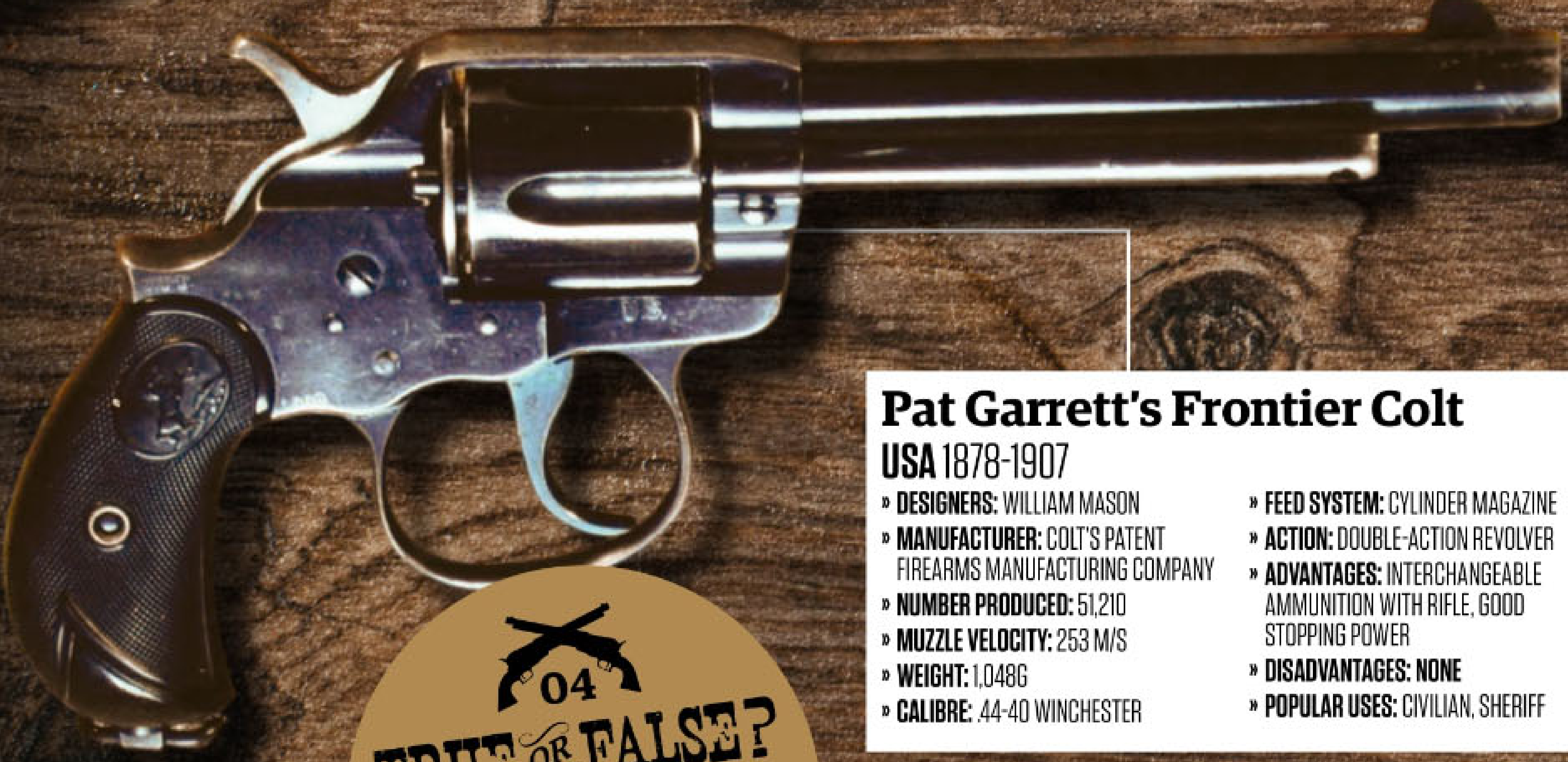
FIREARM SHOWDOWN

For shootouts, showdowns, soldiers and civilians, these were the guns that won the West. The Kid and Garrett made darned sure their tools of the trade were the best

Pat Garrett's Sharps rifle

USA 1850-81

- **DESIGNERS:** CHRISTIAN SHARPS
- **MANUFACTURER:** SHARPS RIFLE MANUFACTURING COMPANY
- **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 120,000+
- **EFFECTIVE RANGE:** 460M
- **WEIGHT:** 4.3KG
- **CALIBRE:** .52
- **FEED SYSTEM:** 1 ROUND
- **ACTION:** FALLING BLOCK, BREECH LOADING
- **ADVANTAGES:** VERSATILE
- **DISADVANTAGES:** WASTEFUL, EXPENSIVE
- **POPULAR USES:** MILITARY, HUNTING, SPORT



Pat Garrett's Frontier Colt

USA 1878-1907

- **DESIGNERS:** WILLIAM MASON
- **MANUFACTURER:** COLT'S PATENT FIREARMS MANUFACTURING COMPANY
- **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 51,210
- **MUZZLE VELOCITY:** 253 M/S
- **WEIGHT:** 1,048G
- **CALIBRE:** .44-40 WINCHESTER
- **FEED SYSTEM:** CYLINDER MAGAZINE
- **ACTION:** DOUBLE-ACTION REVOLVER
- **ADVANTAGES:** INTERCHANGEABLE AMMUNITION WITH RIFLE, GOOD STOPPING POWER
- **DISADVANTAGES:** NONE
- **POPULAR USES:** CIVILIAN, SHERIFF

04

TRUE OR FALSE?

HE KILLED 21 MEN, ONE FOR EACH YEAR OF HIS LIFE

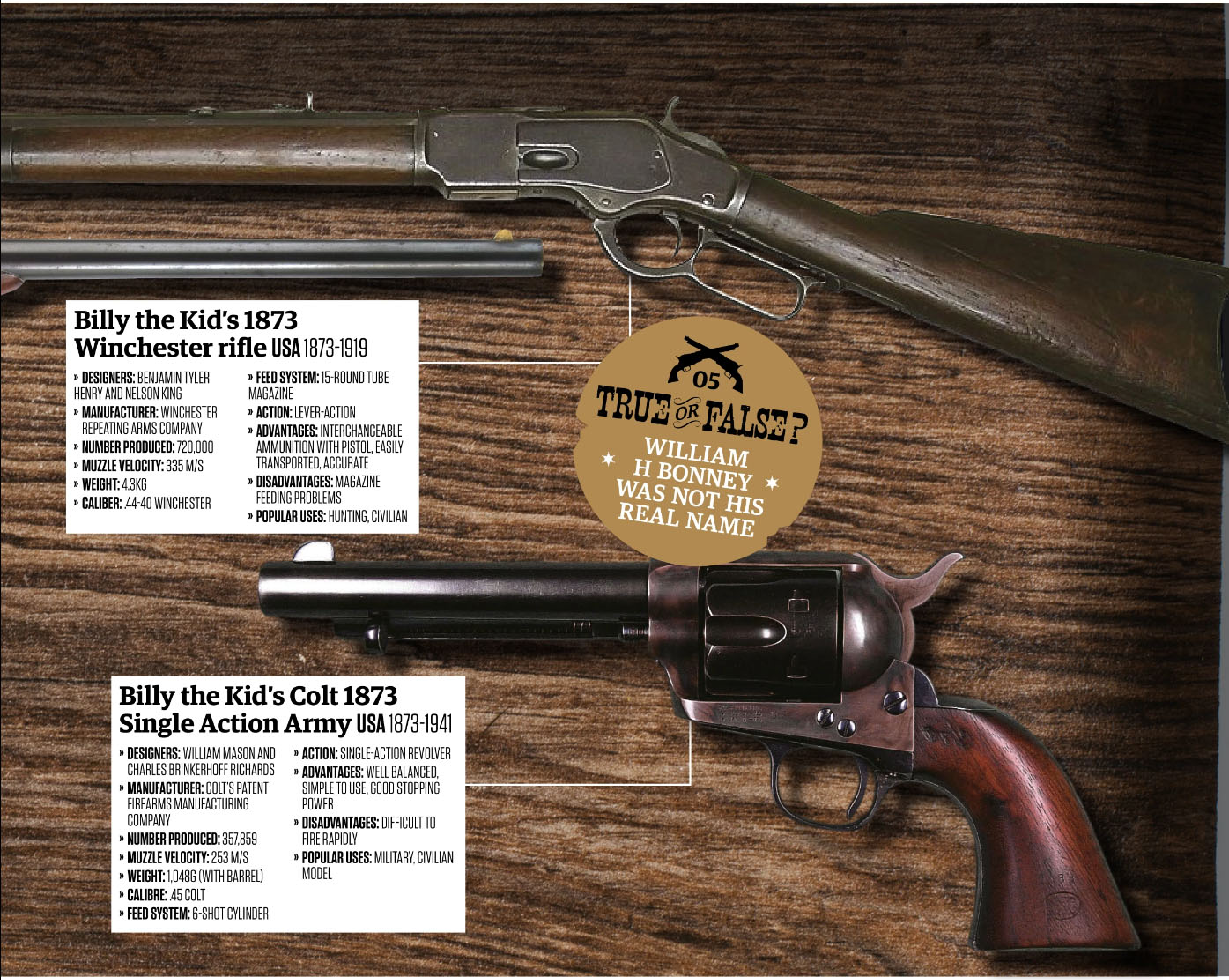
Romero leading a posse of swaggering Mexicans to Puerto de Luna, shot and wounded a known felon named Mariano Leiva, talked his way out of Romero and his posse's misguided attempts to arrest him for this shooting and then learned of another party – led by an agent for the Panhandle stockmen the Kid had rustled cattle from – who was also hot on the trail of the Kid. Nerves of steel, a steady hand, sharp wit and no short measure of luck had eventually seen Garrett true once again.

Garrett met with Panhandle agent Frank Stewart at Las Vegas, the former Spanish colonial town of New Mexico and not the bright-light city-to-be more than 1,000 kilometres to the west. They left on 14 December to catch up with Stewart's party and broke the news to them: some baulked at the idea of an encounter with the Kid and his gang, but Stewart did not reproach any man who had reservations. "Do as you please boys, but there is no time to talk," he told them. "Those who are going with me, get ready at once. I want no man who hesitates." In the end, Stewart, Mason and Garrett added a further six men to their cause.

Ahead of the party, Garrett had sent a spy, a trustworthy man named Jose Roibal, who rode tirelessly to Fort Sumner to sniff the Kid out. Roibal performed his duty in a suitably subtle fashion and returned to meet Garrett with the news that the outlaw he sought was certainly at Fort Sumner, that he was on the lookout for Garrett and Mason, and that he was prepared to ambush them. The Kid had no idea that Garrett had company with him.

Following this, the posse made their way to an old hospital building on the eastern side of the town to await the return of the outlaws. The Kid arrived sooner than expected. A light snow carpeted the ground so that, despite the low light of the evening, it was still bright outside. Nevertheless, Garrett and company were able to position themselves around the building to their advantage. Outlaws Foliard and Pickett rode up front and were first to feel the sting of the posse's six-shooters, though whose bullets killed Foliard that day remains unknown. Garrett himself missed Pickett, who wheeled around and made for their ranch retreat along with the Kid, Bowdre, Wilson and Rudabaugh – the stagecoach robber and a particularly unsavoury character who the Kid admitted to being the only man he feared.

The marshal's posse regrouped and made preparations for the chase. There were just five



Billy the Kid's 1873 Winchester rifle USA 1873-1919

- **DESIGNERS:** BENJAMIN TYLER HENRY AND NELSON KING
- **MANUFACTURER:** WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS COMPANY
- **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 720,000
- **MUZZLE VELOCITY:** 335 M/S
- **WEIGHT:** 4.3KG
- **CALIBER:** .44-40 WINCHESTER
- **FEED SYSTEM:** 15-ROUND TUBE MAGAZINE
- **ACTION:** LEVER-ACTION
- **ADVANTAGES:** INTERCHANGEABLE AMMUNITION WITH PISTOL, EASILY TRANSPORTED, ACCURATE
- **DISADVANTAGES:** MAGAZINE FEEDING PROBLEMS
- **POPULAR USES:** HUNTING, CIVILIAN

05

TRUE OR FALSE?

WILLIAM H BONNEY WAS NOT HIS REAL NAME

Billy the Kid's Colt 1873 Single Action Army USA 1873-1941

- **DESIGNERS:** WILLIAM MASON AND CHARLES BRINKERHOFF RICHARDS
- **MANUFACTURER:** COLT'S PATENT FIREARMS MANUFACTURING COMPANY
- **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 357,859
- **MUZZLE VELOCITY:** 253 M/S
- **WEIGHT:** 1,048G (WITH BARREL)
- **CALIBRE:** .45 COLT
- **FEED SYSTEM:** 6-SHOT CYLINDER
- **ACTION:** SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVER
- **ADVANTAGES:** WELL BALANCED, SIMPLE TO USE, GOOD STOPPING POWER
- **DISADVANTAGES:** DIFFICULT TO FIRE RAPIDLY
- **POPULAR USES:** MILITARY, CIVILIAN MODEL

men to track now. Garrett had learned from another reliable local that they had holed up in an abandoned house near Stinking Springs, a piece of parched no-man's land where murky water bubbled up into a pool in a depression. It was a few hours before dawn that they made this short ride, which proved their new information true: horses were tied to the rafters outside the building. The Kid was cornered and furthermore, Garrett's approach had not been detected, so they still had the advantage of surprise. The posse split and spread out along the perimeter to play the waiting game in the darkness.

As day broke, one of the gang left the building via its only exit. In the half-light, he appeared to have the height, build and most importantly, was wearing the characteristic Stetson of Billy the Kid. Knowing the Kid would not give up easily, Garrett signalled to the posse, who peppered the figure with bullets. Mortally wounded, Charley Bowdre stumbled back into the house, before the Kid pushed him back out with the words: "They have murdered you Charley, but you can still get revenge. Kill some of the sons of bitches before you die." But if the blood hadn't all leaked out of him by then, the fight certainly had, because Bowdre lurched towards the posse and collapsed before he could even get his hand to his pistol.

The jig was up for Garrett, but the Kid's gang was now down to four and their only exit was covered. Just to tip the scales further in his favour, Garrett shot one of the three horses dead to partially cover the exit and then shot the ropes on the other two, both of which promptly cantered away. The marshal felt he was in a position now, to parley: "How you fixed in there, Kid?"

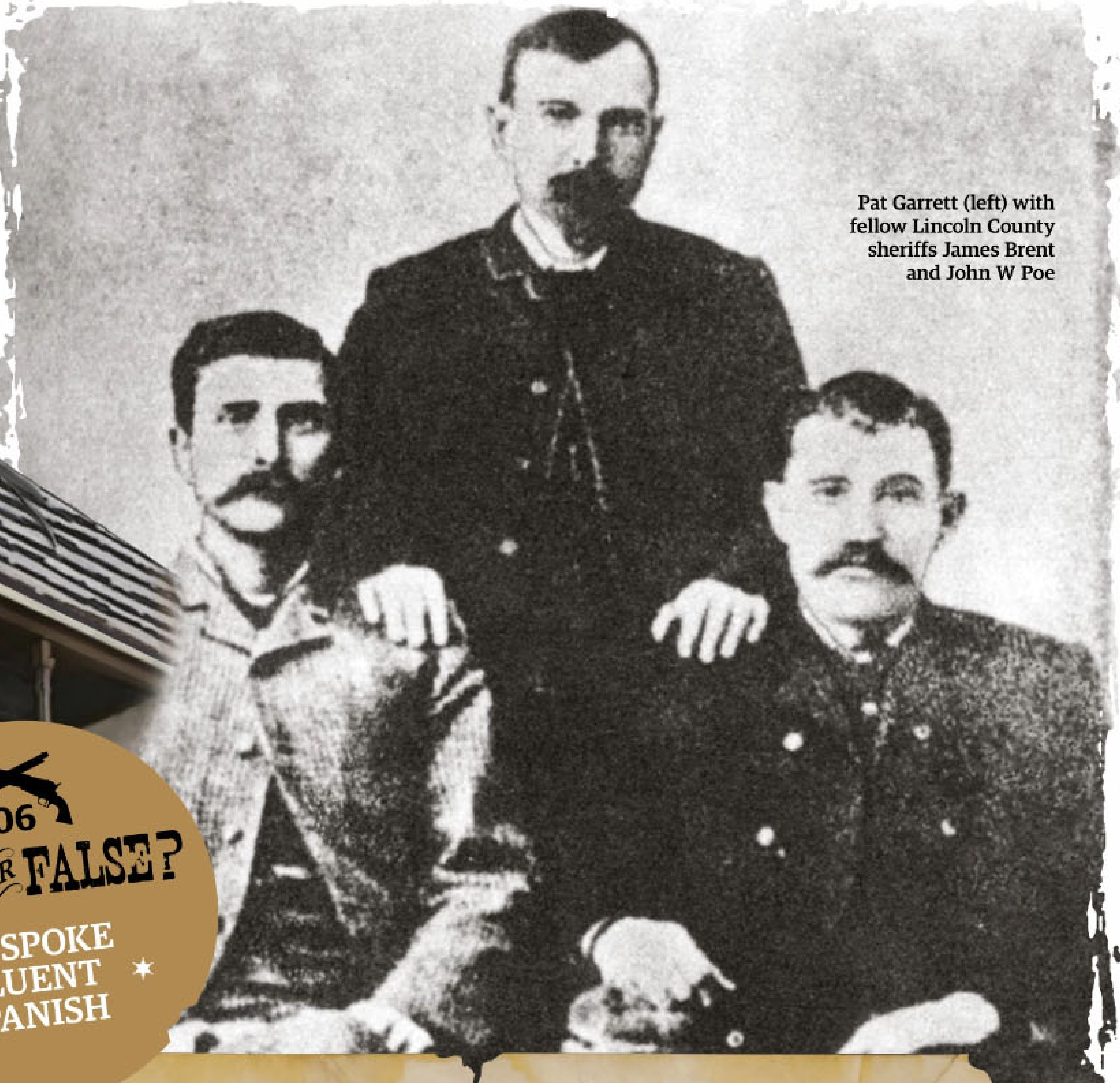
"Pretty well," came the reply, "but we have no wood to get breakfast."

"Come out and get some. Be a little sociable."

"Can't do it, Pat. Business is too confining. No time to run around."

An idea struck Garrett. Having rode through the pre-dawn and played the waiting game in the bitter cold, his men were likewise famished, so he sent for some provisions from Wilcox's ranch; a few hours later, a fire had been built. The sweet scent of roasting meat further weakened the outlaws' resolve until Rudabaugh dangled a filthy handkerchief out of a window in surrender. An eager foursome exited the house to collect the meal that had just cost them their freedom.

Garrett now had his man, but the Kid was as slippery as an eel. They survived a lynch mob at Las Vegas before the Kid was tried at Mesilla for the murder of Andrew 'Buckshot' Roberts. He was acquitted in March 1881, but was then found guilty of the murder of Sheriff William Brady



Pat Garrett (left) with fellow Lincoln County sheriffs James Brent and John W Poe

06

TRUE OR FALSE?

HE SPOKE FLUENT SPANISH

EXPERT Q&A

Robert Stahl

Robert is a historian, professor emeritus at Arizona State University and member of the Billy The Kid Outlaw Gang (BTKOG) – a non-profit organisation with aim of preserving the truth and promoting education in the history of Billy the Kid.

Several theories counter the reports of the Kid's death with tales of his survival. Why do you think these tales persist today?

Number one is that a great many people who accept the 'survival' tale have not read the histories of the Kid's death by serious historians, so they are susceptible to entertaining stories about the Kid not being killed. Number two is the fact that many people cannot accept that it was mere coincidence that Garrett and the Kid were in Pete Maxwell's bedroom at the same time while believing the Kid was too smart or too fast on the draw to allow himself to be killed in the dark as he was. Number three is the fact that many documentaries – even those that include professional historians – bring up the rumours that the Kid was not killed as though these rumours have a touch of credibility.

Is it possible that Garrett could have shot the wrong man in that darkened room?

The whole hamlet of more than 50 people saw the Kid's body once or more during the morning of his death, as his body was washed and clothed by local women and was on display in the saloon for part of the morning. It was also taken back to Pete Maxwell's bedroom and placed at or near the spot where the Kid fell. Not one of the individuals who were there ever said it was not the Kid. Indeed all went to their graves, some over 50 years after the Kid's death, insisting they saw the Kid dead. Furthermore, six men who knew the Kid well both in person and on sight served on the coroner's jury, and all swore it was the Kid. So there is ample eyewitness support by numerous credible persons that Garrett did not kill the wrong man in that darkened room.

You've been pursuing a death certificate from the New Mexico Supreme Court for the man known as 'Billy the Kid', for 15 July 1881. Why wasn't that originally issued? What would the reason be for the court not to create the certificate today?

My colleagues, Dr Nancy N Stahl and Marilyn Stahl Fischer, and I pursued a death certificate for the Kid because one was never created – and as part of that certificate we have been adamant about the fact that it should include the Kid's actual death date of 15 July 1881 as opposed to the traditional date of 14 July. The coroner's jury report never stated a time or date of death, which was typical of the era in rural areas of the Old West. Furthermore, I have yet to find a violent death in New Mexico in the 1800s that was followed by a death certificate being created. The Supreme Court cannot 'create' a death certificate, but can order the state office that can to do its duty and create one. We went to the Supreme Court after months of trying to get the Office of the Medical Investigator to act. They refused to do their statutory duties and then refused to get back to us. We had no other legal recourse in New Mexico other than to go to the Supreme Court. We supplied credible and substantial documentary evidence to the Supreme Court for them to act in our favour, but they have not issued the court order to the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator for them to act. We believe that the Supreme Court and the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator consider our efforts to be publicity stunts rather than a good faith request by three historians to correct the historical record.

BILLY THE KID
WILLIAM HENRY ROBERTS

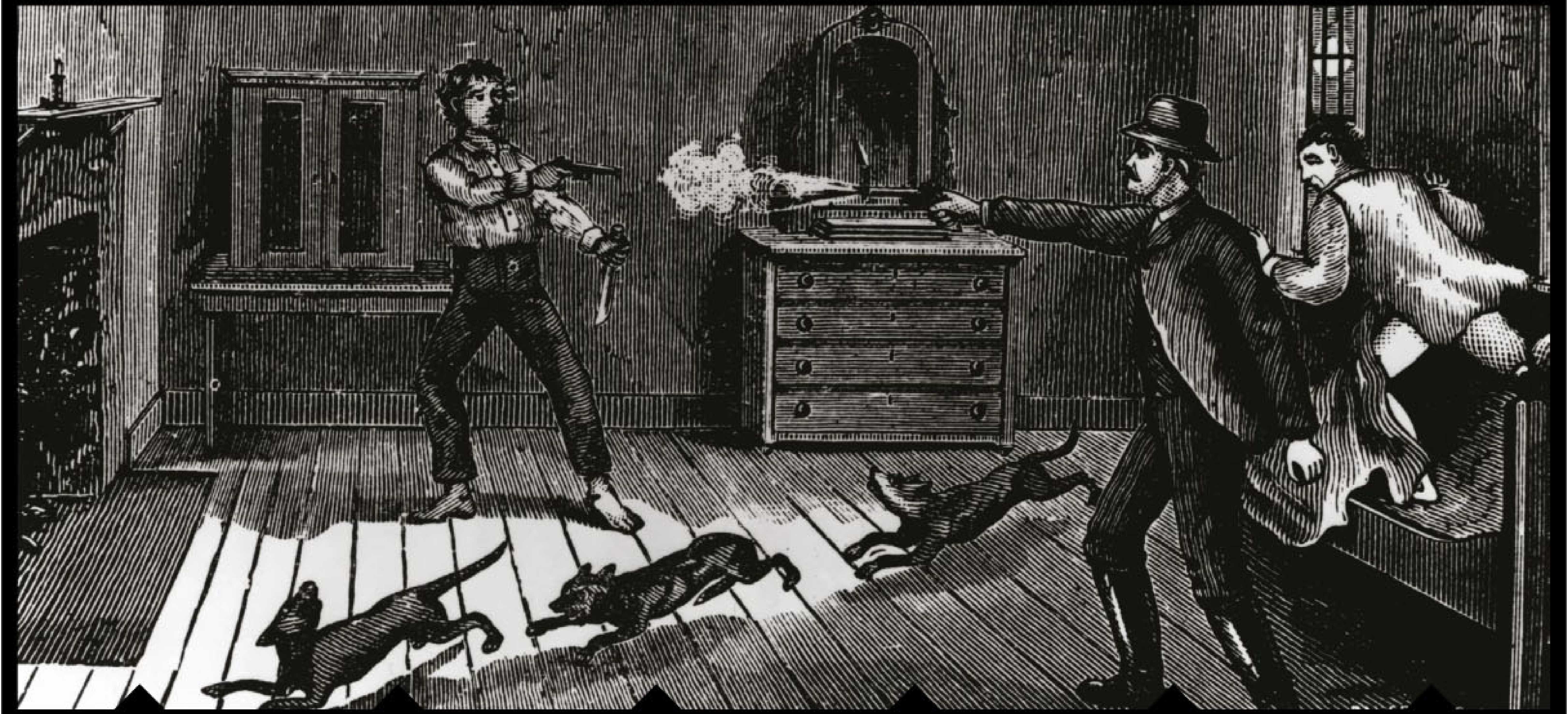
William Henry Roberts claimed to be Billy the Kid after his death

The BTKOG seeks to preserve and promote the truth about the Kid. Is there much in the way of rumour surrounding the legend you'd like to quash?

I do believe that important events in the current accepted stories of his escape from the Lincoln County Jail on 28 April need to be 'squashed', such as the notion that he picked up a gun in the privy when he went to relieve himself and that he intended all along to kill Bob Olinger. Another that needs to end immediately is the rumour that there was widespread belief that Garrett did not kill the 'real' Billy the Kid. Quite the contrary, for more than three decades after 1881 there were no stories – not even a hint of a rumour – printed in even one New Mexico newspaper that suggested the Kid was still alive. Indeed, at the time of his death in 1908, Garrett was well recognised throughout New Mexico and the nation as the man who killed Billy the Kid. Had there been any doubt, he would not have been acclaimed by everyone as the killer of the Kid.

How the Kid met his maker

A blow-by-blow account of how Pat Garrett sent Billy the Kid to his grave



23.55, 14 July 1881
The Kid is in one of the run-down houses on Peter Maxwell's property when he decides he's hungry, grabs a knife and makes his way over to Maxwell's house to cut himself some beef.

00.00, 15 July 1881
Garrett has already entered the house himself and goes to the bedroom to speak to Maxwell to glean information on the whereabouts of the Kid. He sits on a chair near his pillow.

00.04
Garrett's companions are outside when the Kid passes them, but they have no idea what he looks like and this person speaks fluent Spanish to some nearby Mexicans, so they don't identify him.

00.05
The Kid enters the house. He is barefoot and not wearing his trademark hat. It's dark, so Garrett doesn't recognise him. Garrett stiffens as Maxwell whispers the identity of the man.

00.05.05
As the Kid approaches Maxwell, he makes out a second figure in the chair. Garrett pulls his gun and, almost simultaneously, the Kid goes for his own revolver, asking: "Quien es? Quien es?"

00.05.06
A heartbeat later, Garrett has pulled the trigger and thrown himself to the floor for another shot, but his aim was true. The Kid falls to the floor and barely has time to exhale before he is dead.

and sentenced to be hung five weeks later on 13 May. Because there was no jail in Lincoln county, he was held in a two-storey repurposed warehouse watched by Deputy Sheriff Bell and Deputy Marshal Olinger, where the Kid made the most of a window of opportunity afforded to him by his lackadaisical wardens to steal a gun, kill his guards and make a spectacular escape from his prison.

Garrett was smarting when he realised his inadequate provision for the incarceration of the Kid and returned to Fort Sumner, where the Kid was believed to have fled, but the trail had once again gone cold. For the next two and a half months, Garrett would be kicking over stones well into the sweltering New Mexico summer before his final encounter with the fugitive.

In early July and in the company of Frank Stewart's replacement, John W Poe and Thomas K McKinney, who had been deputised, Garrett could be found a few miles north of Fort Sumner, adjusting his course according to hearsay and instinct. This took them to the home of Peter Maxwell where, near a row of dilapidated buildings, a slim man in a broad-rimmed hat could be heard talking in Spanish to some Mexicans. They had found their man - but none of the trio recognised him from a distance. As it turned out, the Kid hadn't recognised them either. He slipped off the wall he was perched on and walked casually away to Maxwell's house.

After the stand-off at Stinking Springs and the Kid's dramatic escape from jail, his death seems anticlimactic: just after midnight on 15 July, Billy the Kid entered Peter Maxwell's house to pick up some beef for his supper. Garrett was in Pete's darkened bedroom quizzing him on the whereabouts of the Kid when the very man he was hunting stepped through the door. Pete whispered to Garrett his identity and, leaving nothing to chance, Garrett took two shots, struck the Kid in his left breast and killed him.

In the memoirs he wrote shortly after the inquest that had discharged the marshal of his duty and deemed the homicide justifiable, Garrett dedicates no more than a short paragraph to the unfolding scene in the dark room. There was no classic showdown, the men weren't even aware of each other's presence until those final mortal seconds, and with his last words, it seems the Kid didn't even know who had sent him to meet his maker. In as much that the Kid's infamy began to spread during the long nothing periods of Garrett's hunt, when rumour of this rebellious young gunslinger and his long-legged lawman nemesis gestated into legend, his ignominious demise has, perhaps fittingly, been made much of by countless authors and Hollywood film makers since.

07
TRUE OR FALSE?
THE KID AND GARRETT WERE FRIENDS

The Answer

01. FALSE
He was just another nobody outlaw until his escape from Lincoln jail in April 1881 and it wasn't until the 1926 book *The Saga Of Billy The Kid* that the legend really took off.

02. FALSE
Several witnesses, including Garrett himself, testified to the death of the Kid that day.

03. FALSE
The only authenticated photograph of him had been flipped, so his rifle was shown on the wrong side.

04. FALSE
The Kid is thought to have killed nine, five of those in shoot-outs.

05. TRUE
Billy the Kid was actually born as Henry McCarty and Bonney was just another alias.

06. TRUE
In the years following former colonial Mexico, Spanish was as common as English.

07. FALSE
Although they did know of each other prior to Garrett's deputisation and bore each other no ill will.

© Corbis, Getty Images, The Art Agency, Thinkstock

SALOO

WYATT EARP'S WILD WEST

With his own and his family's lives threatened by a murderous band of outlaws, Wyatt Earp took the law into his own hands and formed a posse to track them down, becoming a hunted outlaw himself

Four gunshots splintered another dry and dusty night in Tombstone, Arizona. A man, wandering from the town's central Crystal Palace Saloon back to the Cosmopolitan Hotel, suddenly felt time slow to a crawl as his back and arm were lit up in a blaze of agonising pain. The contact of three loads of double-barrelled buckshots slammed into him like a runaway freight train. The force of the impact sent him crashing back into the side of the Crystal Palace, with excess shots peppering the saloon's walls and smashing through its windows. In excruciating pain, the fallen man stumbled toward the Cosmopolitan, blood dripping from him onto the baked earth. Drawing upon his last reserves of energy, he managed to reach the hotel's entrance and fall through its door - a moment later everything was black. Across the street on the upper floor of an unfinished building, the assassins slipped away into the night.

The morning after, on 29 December 1881, Tombstone's Deputy Town Marshal Wyatt Earp sent a telegram that read: "Virgil Earp was shot by concealed assassins last night. His wounds are fatal. Telegraph me appointment with power to appoint deputies. Local authorities are doing nothing. The lives of other citizens are threatened. Wyatt Earp."

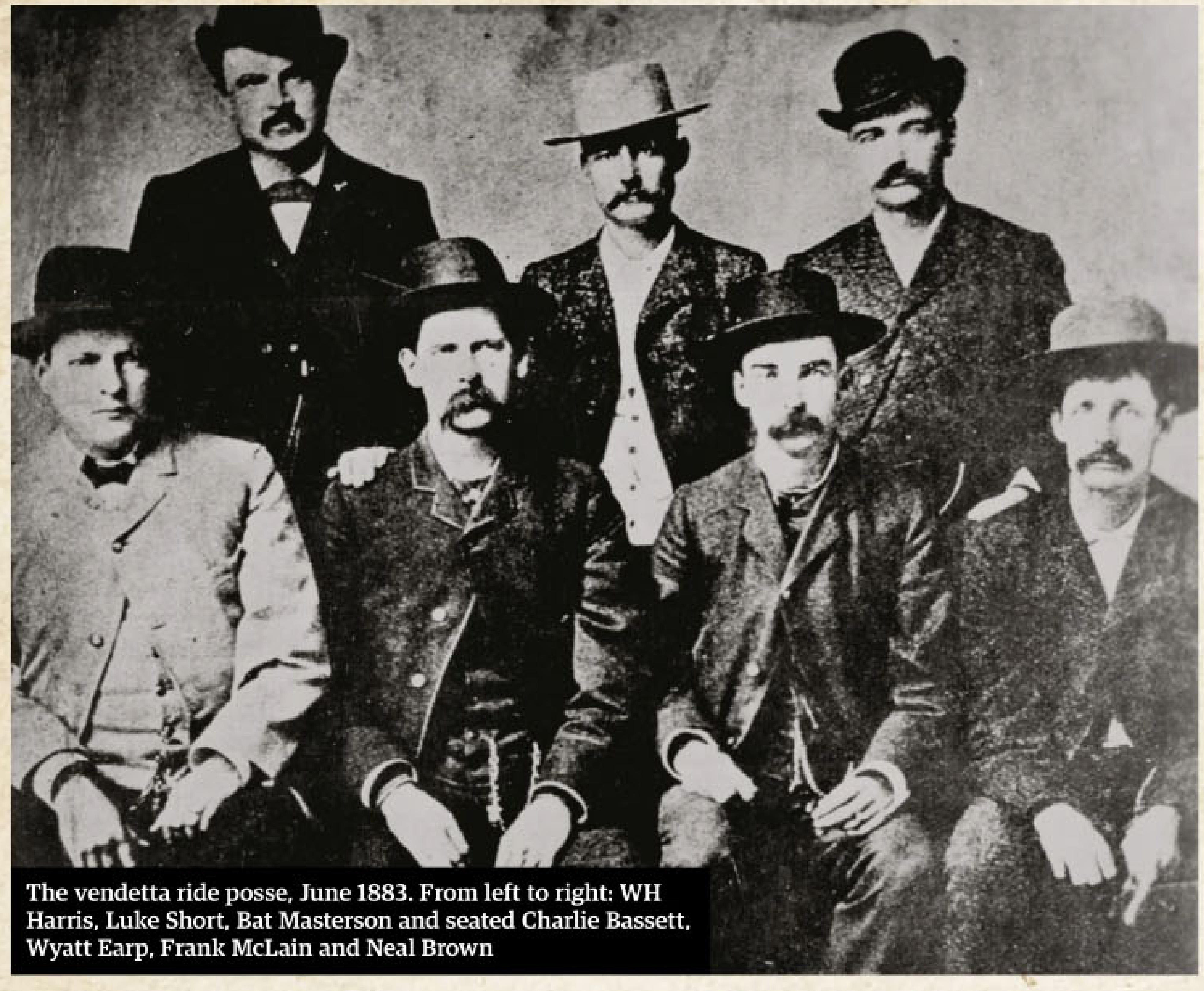
For weeks, Wyatt, his brothers and their friends had been receiving death threats for their role in the Shoot-out at the OK Corral, a gunfight that had seen a number of infamous outlaws taken out. The critical condition of his brother Virgil convinced Wyatt that everyone he knew and loved had been marked for death. Unfortunately, while the lawman knew those responsible he was powerless to act, with the sheriff of Tombstone, Johnny Behan, openly hostile to the Earps. Behan was close friends with William 'Curly Bill' Brocius whom Earp believed had his brother's blood on his hands.

The tall, pale and serious-looking Wyatt, with his rough and gravelly voice, was going over the head of Behan to US Marshal Crawley P Dake, a man who had the authority to grant Wyatt deputising powers to assemble a posse capable of bringing the assassins to justice. The question was whether or not Dake would free his hands and if so, how quickly his confirmation would reach Tombstone. With the assassins still at large, the danger to all of the Earps and their friends was at a critical level. Luckily for Wyatt he soon received a return telegram. In it, Dake officially bestowed deputising powers on Wyatt and issued a mandate that he was free to pursue the assassins at his discretion.

Back at the Cosmopolitan, local doctor George E Goodfellow amazingly announced that Virgil would live, although his left arm would be permanently crippled. Upon finally waking from his coma and being told about his crippled arm, Virgil showed the characteristic Earp grit by telling his wife Allie: "Never mind, I've got one arm left to hug you with."

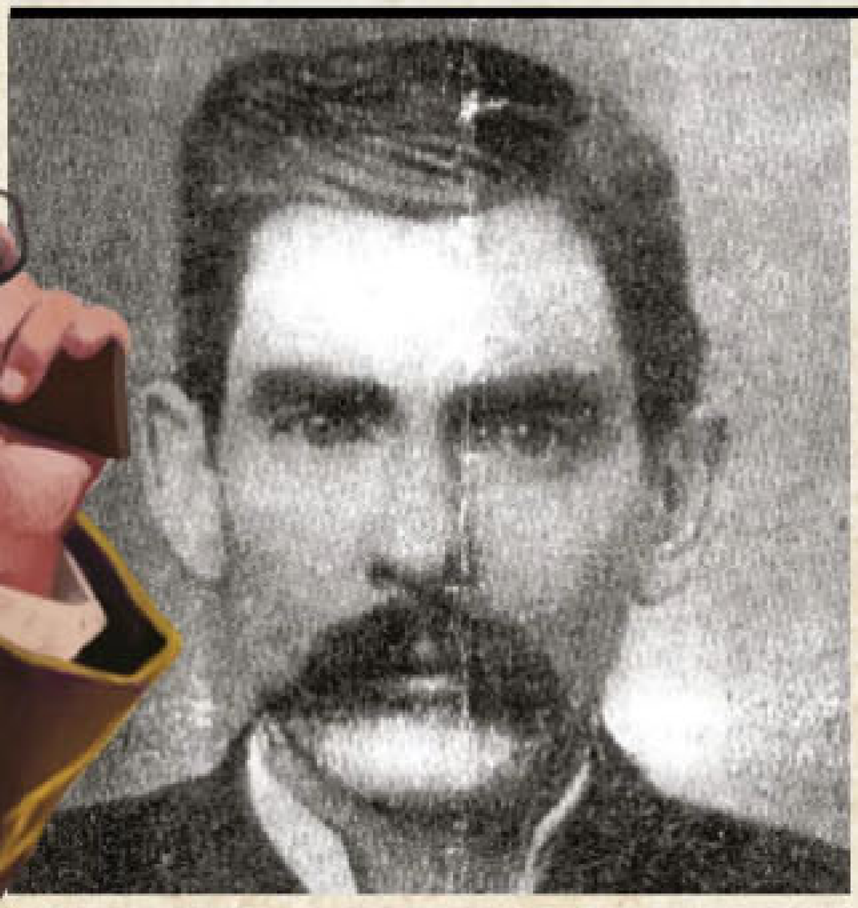
While relieved that his brother had survived, hatred for the assassins had begun to take hold of Wyatt, with him thinking of little other than revenge. He also knew who could help him get it. His old ally Doc Holliday would ride with him, as would his other brother Warren Earp, but for a job like this he needed ruthless professionals. As such, Sherman McMaster and Jack 'Turkey Creek' Johnson were first on his list; tough men who had what it takes to kill a man. Joining McMaster and Johnson would be Charles 'Hairlip Charlie' Smith and John 'Texas Jack' Vermillion – men who had a checkered past but experience of battle.

Three months passed after Virgil's shooting with no major activity. One of the Wild West's greatest lawmen hadn't been idle, though, as by 18 March 1882, he had his posse gathered in Tombstone while his brother Virgil was making his first tentative steps out of his sickbed. It seemed things were falling into place for Wyatt. He just needed to ensure his brother's safe passage out of Arizona and the vendetta ride could begin. However, his plans were shaken to their foundations as the very night Virgil started walking again, his younger brother Morgan was set upon at Tombstone's Campbell & Hatch Billiard Parlor. He was shot through the establishment's window, the bullet shattering his spine and sending him shuddering back into a billiard table. Wyatt rushed to the parlour where he was


The vendetta ride posse, June 1883. From left to right: WH Harris, Luke Short, Bat Masterson and seated Charlie Bassett, Wyatt Earp, Frank McLain and Neal Brown

> "Drawing his .44 Schofield Smith & Wesson revolver from his holster, Wyatt carefully aimed for Stilwell's head and fired a single round"

EARP'S VENDETTA POSSE



JOHN 'DOC' HOLLIDAY

1851-1887

A trained dentist, professional gambler and sharp-shooting gunfighter, Doc Holliday was one of Wyatt Earp's best and oldest friends, famously fighting with him at the Shoot-out at the OK Corral. By the time of his death five years after the vendetta ride, Holliday had survived eight gunfights, killed six men and wounded countless others.

JOHN 'TEXAS JACK' VERMILLION

1842-1911

A close friend of Doc Holliday, Texas Jack was renowned throughout the Old West for his gunfighting abilities and ice cold demeanour when under fire. He played a key role in the closing Iron Springs gunfight of the vendetta ride, fighting fiercely and fearlessly even when his horse was shot dead from under him during the confrontation.

DAN 'TIP' TIPTON

1844-1898

An experienced sailor and gambler, Dan Tipton was one of the people present when Wyatt Earp's brother Morgan was assassinated at the Campbell & Hatch Billiard Parlor in Tombstone, Arizona. He rode with Earp for the first part of the vendetta ride, witnessing the gunning down of outlaw Florentino Cruz at Pete Spence's woodcamp.

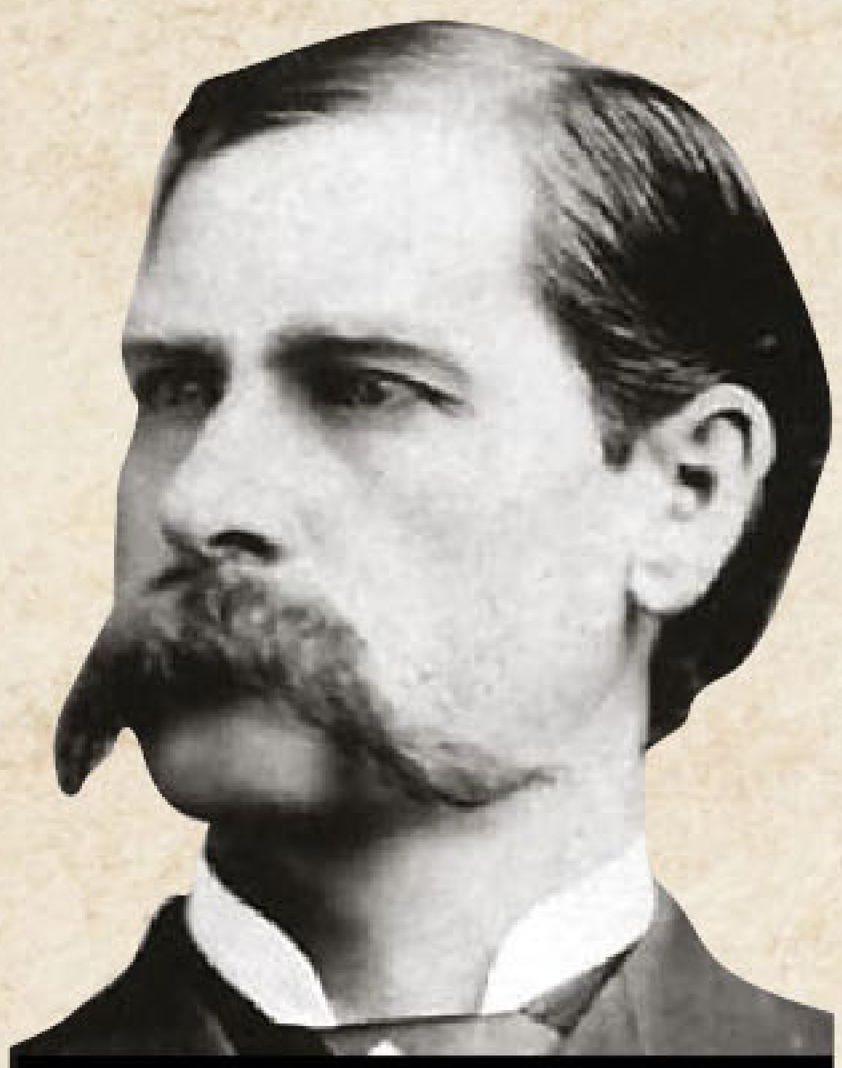
forced to listen as his brother slowly bled to death. The outlaws had gone after two of his brothers, injuring one and killing the other. Wyatt swore that those responsible would be brought to justice and that he would be the one to deliver it.

The following day he decided that, regardless of Virgil's still-weak state, he had to get him out of Arizona now or he would be the next to be taken out. At the same time the coroner Dr DM Mather held an inquest into Morgan's death and discovered that Marietta Duarte, the wife of well-known outlaw Pete Spence knew something and was ready to talk, as she had been habitually abused by Spence. Duarte told Matthew that the day before Morgan's assassination she had overheard her husband talking with Florentino 'Indian Charlie' Cruz. Apparently, Morgan had walked by and she had heard Spence say to Charlie, "That's him, that's him."

Duarte also said that this same night, Indian Charlie and Frank C Stilwell came to Spence's house, armed with pistols and carbine rifles, and that they all talked outside for a while in hushed tones. The following morning, when Marietta confronted Spence about the night's activities, she recounted that Spence hit her and threatened to shoot her if she spoke to anyone about what she had heard. Spence, Stilwell and Cruz were now the prime suspects in Morgan Earp's murder.

Duarte was called to testify this in court and did so, Wyatt looking on from the rear of the courthouse. However, thanks to the then-antiquated legal system, Duarte's testimony was dismissed because a spouse could not testify against her husband. Learning of the judge's decision to free the men Wyatt knew the law could not be relied on to bring the outlaws to justice and realised the only way to put an end to his family's bloodshed would be to kill them all himself.

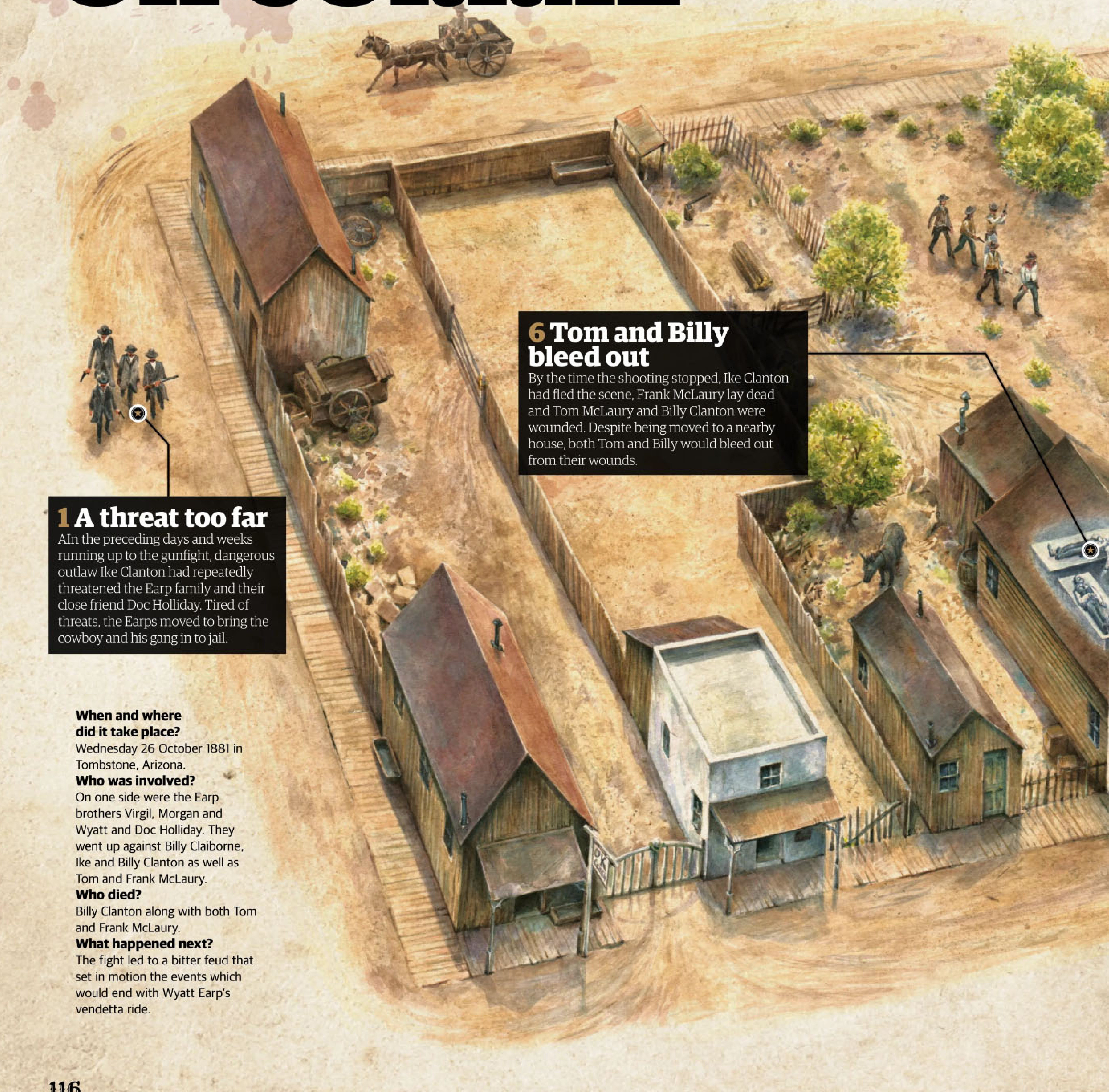
Arrangements were made to escort Virgil and his wife to the train station in Contention City, which they were to board on 20 March and leave the state. Upon arriving, news was received that Frank C Stilwell and others were hunting Virgil and waiting



Before he became a man of the law, Wyatt Earp worked numerous jobs, including as a buffalo hunter and saloonkeeper

In the Wild West saloon bars were often where vendettas were settled

SHOOT-OUT AT THE OK CORRAL



1 A threat too far

AIn the preceding days and weeks running up to the gunfight, dangerous outlaw Ike Clanton had repeatedly threatened the Earp family and their close friend Doc Holliday. Tired of threats, the Earps moved to bring the cowboy and his gang in to jail.

6 Tom and Billy bleed out

By the time the shooting stopped, Ike Clanton had fled the scene, Frank McLaury lay dead and Tom McLaury and Billy Clanton were wounded. Despite being moved to a nearby house, both Tom and Billy would bleed out from their wounds.

When and where did it take place?
Wednesday 26 October 1881 in Tombstone, Arizona.

Who was involved?
On one side were the Earp brothers Virgil, Morgan and Wyatt and Doc Holliday. They went up against Billy Claiborne, Ike and Billy Clanton as well as Tom and Frank McLaury.

Who died?
Billy Clanton along with both Tom and Frank McLaury.

What happened next?
The fight led to a bitter feud that set in motion the events which would end with Wyatt Earp's vendetta ride.

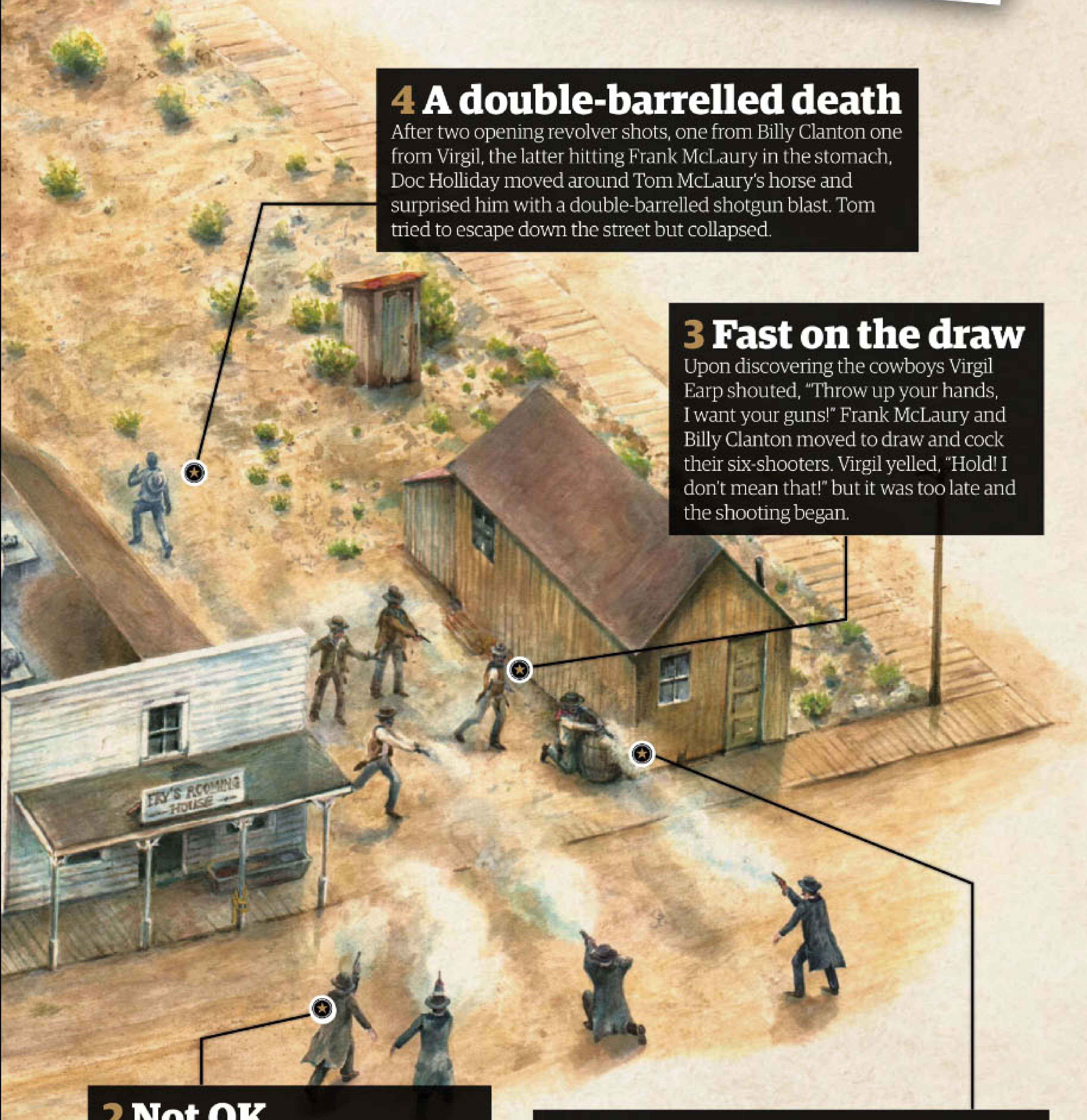
in Tucson – the next stop on Virgil's intended trip to California – to murder him. As such, Wyatt and his men remained with Virgil up to Tucson.

After spending a night in a nearby hotel before escorting Virgil and his wife to the train the next morning, Wyatt spotted two figures lying in wait on a nearby flat-car; Frank Stilwell and accomplice Ike Clanton. Years of experience as a law man mixed in with the culminate rage of months of death, threats and living in fear and Wyatt Earp ran full speed, shotgun in hand, at the men. Seeing Wyatt and Doc Holliday approaching, Stilwell and Clanton turned to run, but Stilwell tripped and fell. Scrambling around in the dust of the train yard, Stilwell attempted to regain his footing but it was too late; Wyatt was on him. A double-barrelled shotgun pointing directly at his chest at point-blank range, Stilwell caught a glimpse of the burning hatred within Wyatt's eyes before both barrels were unloaded into his torso.

Stilwell's short scream was immediately terminated with the blast, with six buckshot holes blown through his body and powder-burnt holes on the back of his coat. Drawing his .44 Schofield Smith & Wesson revolver from his holster, Wyatt carefully aimed for Stilwell's head and then fired a single round into his skull. Stilwell had been a lying, double-crossing, murdering rabid dog. There was only one thing to do with rabid dogs – put them down. Leaving Stilwell's corpse to grow cold in the early morning sun, Wyatt and his posse watched as the train with Virgil and his wife on slowly pulled out of the station, bound for California and safety.

The gang made their way back to Tombstone but back in Tucson the remains of Stilwell had

Tombstone, Arizona, 1881



2 Not OK

The location of the Shoot-out at the OK Corral was actually not directly at the building, but in a narrow lot six doors west of its rear entrance. When the Earps and the Clanton gang faced off, they were only about 1.8m (6ft) from each other.

3 Fast on the draw

Upon discovering the cowboys Virgil Earp shouted, "Throw up your hands, I want your guns!" Frank McLaury and Billy Clanton moved to draw and cock their six-shooters. Virgil yelled, "Hold! I don't mean that!" but it was too late and the shooting began.

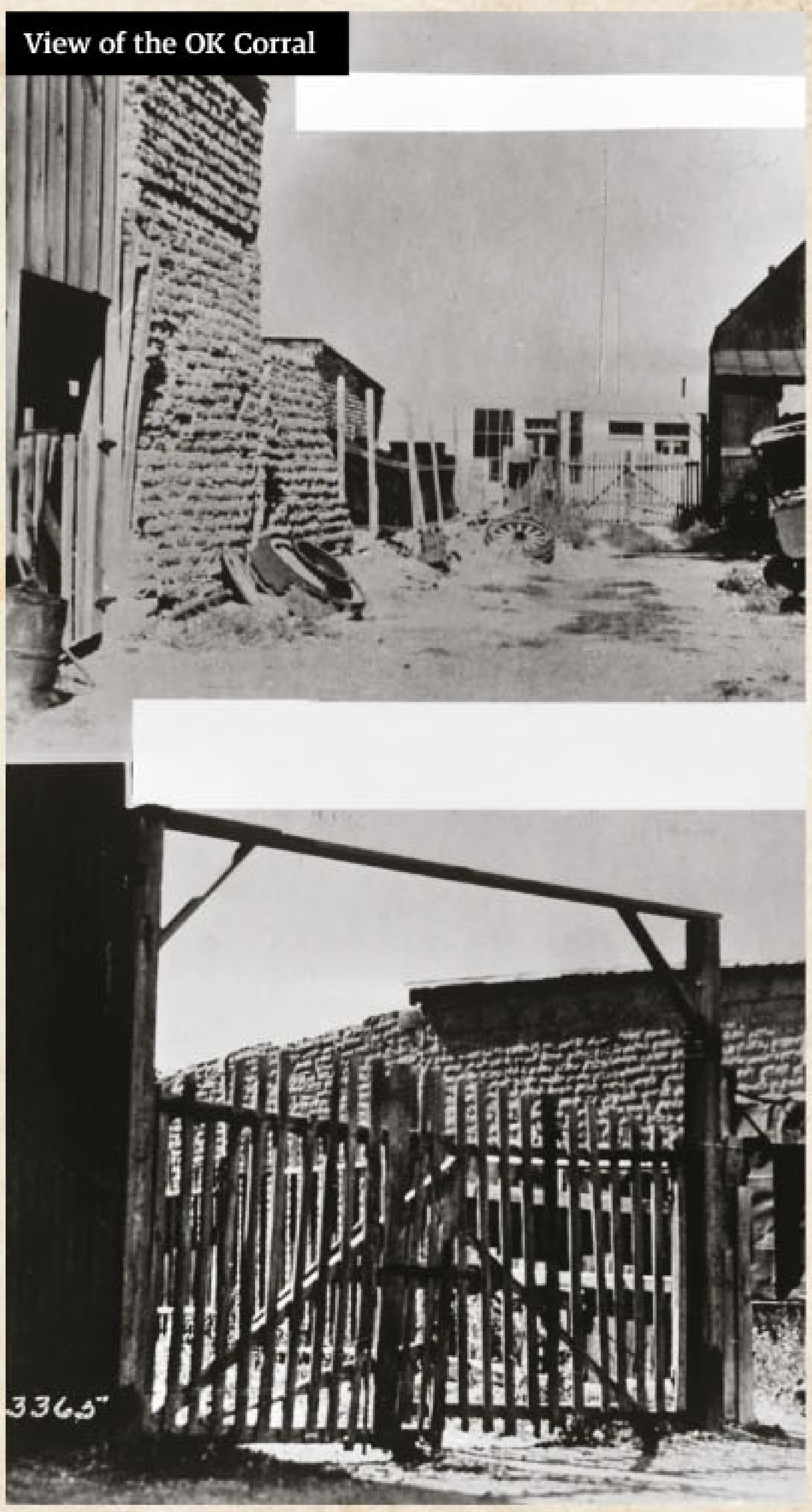
4 A double-barrelled death

After two opening revolver shots, one from Billy Clanton one from Virgil, the latter hitting Frank McLaury in the stomach, Doc Holliday moved around Tom McLaury's horse and surprised him with a double-barrelled shotgun blast. Tom tried to escape down the street but collapsed.

5 McLaury gunned down

A chaotic exchange of gunfire then occurred, with Billy Clanton shooting Morgan Earp across the back, wounding his shoulder and he himself being hit in the wrist. Frank McLaury exchanged some shots with Doc Holliday but was then shot through the head and killed instantly.

View of the OK Corral



been discovered and his killing linked to the Earp posse. Tucson Justice of the Peace Charles Meyer issued arrest warrants for all five members of the posse and sent a telegram back to Tombstone, stating that Sheriff Behan should arrest them. What Meyer couldn't have known, however, was that the telegraph office manager was a friend to the Earp family and upon receiving the telegram showed it to Wyatt when he rode into town.

The gunslinger knew that if his old adversary Behan saw the telegram he would try to stop the vendetta posse in its tracks, so began preparing a quick exit. However, Behan had rushed to the hotel and found the men he was looking for in the lobby, heavily armed and about to leave. Walking straight up to Wyatt he told him that he was to accompany him back to the sheriff's office. Wyatt ignored him before walking through the lobby and outside.

They were met outside the hotel by further members of the posse, John 'Texas Jack' Vermillion and Dan 'Tip' Tipton, Charlie Smith, Fred Dodge, Johnny Green and Lou Cooley. Continuing to ignore an increasingly irate Behan they saddled up and rode out of Tombstone.

The following morning, on 22 March, Wyatt rode into Spence's woodcamp in the South Pass of the Dragoon Mountains. A quick inspection of the area revealed that Spence wasn't there – in fact, he had become so paranoid that Wyatt was going to kill him that he had handed himself in to Sheriff Behan's custody for protection. Wyatt was unaware of this and so decided to make one final search of the premises to make sure Spence wasn't hiding like the coward he knew he was. He suddenly saw movement, a figure running out to the rear and diving into the scrub. It wasn't Spence though, it

> "Stilwell had been a lying, double-crossing, murdering rabid dog. There was only one thing to do with rabid dogs – put them down"

WANTED

The outlaws marked for death

WILLIAM 'CURLY BILL' BROCIUS 1845-1882

A violent criminal, cattle rustler and assassin, Curly Bill was the leader of the outlaws responsible for the murder of Wyatt Earp's brother Morgan. He was known as 'Arizona's most famous outlaw' and spent most of his time leading up to the vendetta ride robbing stagecoaches and threatening rivals with a bloody death.

PETE SPENCE 1852-1914

Pete Spence was a well-known outlaw in Arizona, robbing stagecoaches and rustling cattle. He was a friend and business partner of fellow outlaw and killer Frank Stilwell, who along with Spence, was a key suspect in the assassination of Morgan Earp.

FRANK C STILWELL 1856-1882

A miner and livery stable owner who was known to partake in illegal activities, Stilwell was famously identified as one of the outlaws who had ambushed and murdered Morgan Earp. Lack of evidence saw Stilwell walk free of any punishment, placing him high up on Wyatt Earp's vendetta kill list.

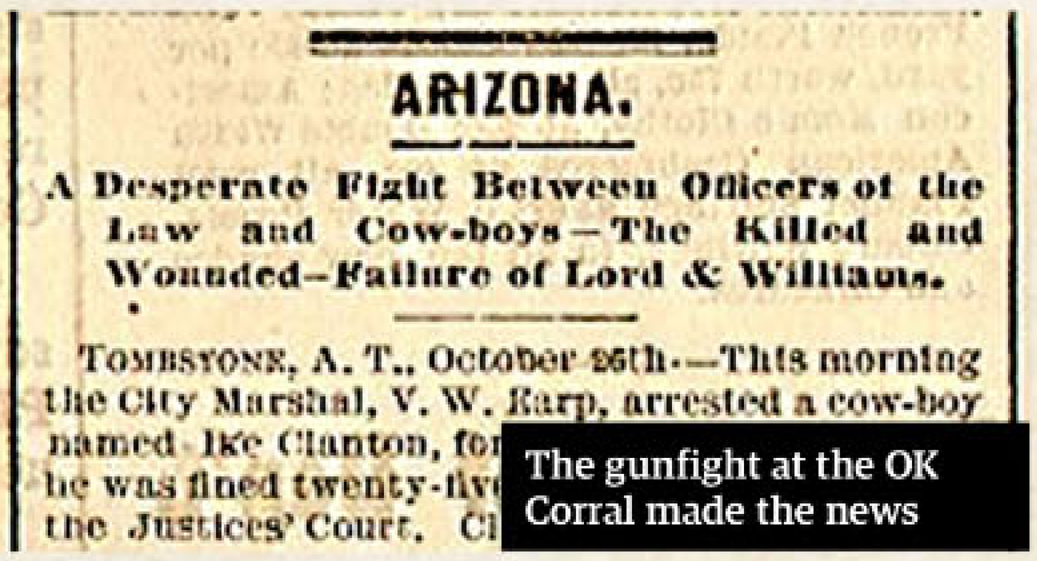
Wyatt's boyhood home

A photo of Wyatt Earp, circa 1882

OK Corral casualties – Tom and Frank McLaury and Billy Clanton in their coffin after being killed at the famous gunfight was Florentino 'Indian Charlie' Cruz, Spence's right-hand man.

Wyatt drew his pistol but couldn't get a clear shot, so called for his men. Holliday, McMaster and Johnson were the fastest, drawing and firing from multiple positions at the fleeing Cruz, who was hit simultaneously in the arm, thigh and pelvis, bringing him crashing into the dust. Cruz's cries of anguish echoed throughout the pass as he started to bleed out, all the time attempting to crawl into cover. Wyatt was on him, quick as a flash though and Cruz started begging for his life. When questioned about the assassination of Morgan he confessed that he had been the lookout. As Wyatt pressed down on Cruz's wound with his spurred boot, a scream curdled out of Cruz into the pass and he shouted the names of the killers. William 'Curly Bill' Brocius. Frank Stilwell. Hank Swilling. Johnny Ringo. As he said each name, a death sentence was passed on them.

Cruz started shouting that Wyatt had got what he wanted and he should leave him alive and send him back to Tombstone. There was only one place Wyatt was going to send Cruz – straight to hell. Drawing his pistol, he placed it to the side of the assassin's head and, punctuated only by a final scream from Cruz, pulled the trigger. A single trail of gunsmoke from his pistol rose slowly into the air. One down, three to go.



ARIZONA.

A Desperate Fight Between Officers of the Law and Cow-boys – The Killed and Wounded – Failure of Lord & Williams.

TOMBSTONE, A. T., October 26th.—This morning the City Marshal, V. W. Earp, arrested a cow-boy named Ike Clanton, for
he was fined twenty-fiv
the Justices' Court. Cl

The gunfight at the OK Corral made the news

HUNTING A LAWMAN

The sheriff chasing down Wyatt Earp

A key player not just in Wyatt Earp's vendetta ride but also the famous Shoot-out at the OK Corral, Johnny Behan was the sheriff of Cochise County in Arizona Territory during both. After the climactic gunfight at the Corral, Behan famously testified against the Earp family, saying they precipitated the shoot-out and therefore murdered three outlaw cowboys in the encounter. The Earps were later exonerated, however, and so started a bitter feud between them and Behan.

While he was known to think himself a model of law and order, Behan in fact had a checkered life, with his wife leaving him in June 1875 for taking a mistress and sleeping with prostitutes. He was also particularly violent toward women, threatening them consistently, both verbally and physically. Behan also liked to associate and deal with known outlaws while off official business, dealing with cowboys such as Ike Clanton, Johnny Ringo and William Brocius, all three who were instrumental in the maiming of Virgil Earp and the murder of Morgan Earp.

Following Behan's famous confrontation with Wyatt Earp in the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Tombstone, and then failed pursuit of Wyatt and his vendetta posse, Behan fell into another feud with his own deputy Billy Breakenridge. Breakenridge accused Behan of misappropriation of illegal monies and after an investigation Behan was shown to have set aside $5,000 from unknown sources while sheriff. While Behan escaped jail, he failed to be renominated as sheriff of Cochise County and was stripped of his rank and authority months after Wyatt left the state.

Behan was stripped of his rank soon after the Wyatt's vendetta ride

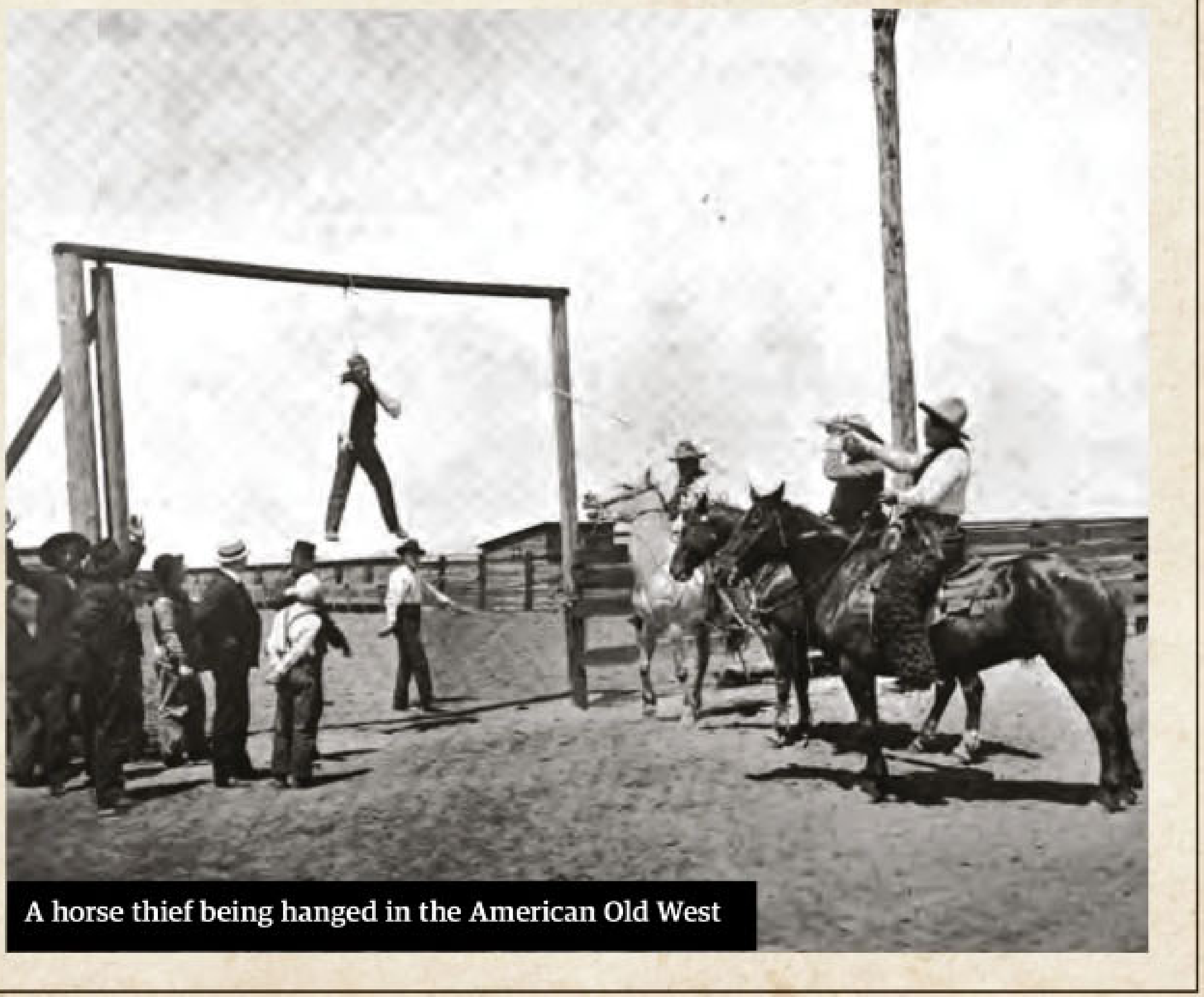
☞ LAW AND ORDER – WILD WEST STYLE ☜

Was there any system of justice in the American Old West?

The American frontier was huge and there was no standardised law enforcement agency keeping control in the Wild West. As such, criminals found many opportunities to rob pioneer families, while what law there was found it difficult to track them down and bring them in, let alone provide concrete evidence that would see them sentenced in court. It was this system that infamous cowboys such as Jesse James, Billy the Kid and Butch Cassidy thrived.

The result of this lawlessness and lack of authority led to many people taking the law into their own hands – as evident by Wyatt Earp's vendetta ride – with the law's apparent impotence to combat outlaws, driving them to take extreme measures. This led to a culture of feuds, bounties and vengeance killings, with rival groups taking turns to avenge each other's latest illegal act. The natural conclusion of this ramshackle tit-for-tat system of justice was that it often led to violence for mere perceived threats, rather than real acts of criminality. The end point for anyone successfully apprehended by law or outlaw was death, typically by shooting or hanging.

Further, the line between legal and illegal, good and bad, justified and cruel, was blurred in the Old West, with outlaws in one state perceived as respected lawmen in the next. Sheriffs, who are often depicted in films as bastions of honour and virtue, were often ex-outlaws themselves who had gained their position through violence and threats, ruling their territory like medieval barons. It was only when the USA became developed enough to establish a true federal system of law and order in the late-19th century that crimes like horse stealing, highway robbery, duelling and cattle rustling were effectively combated.

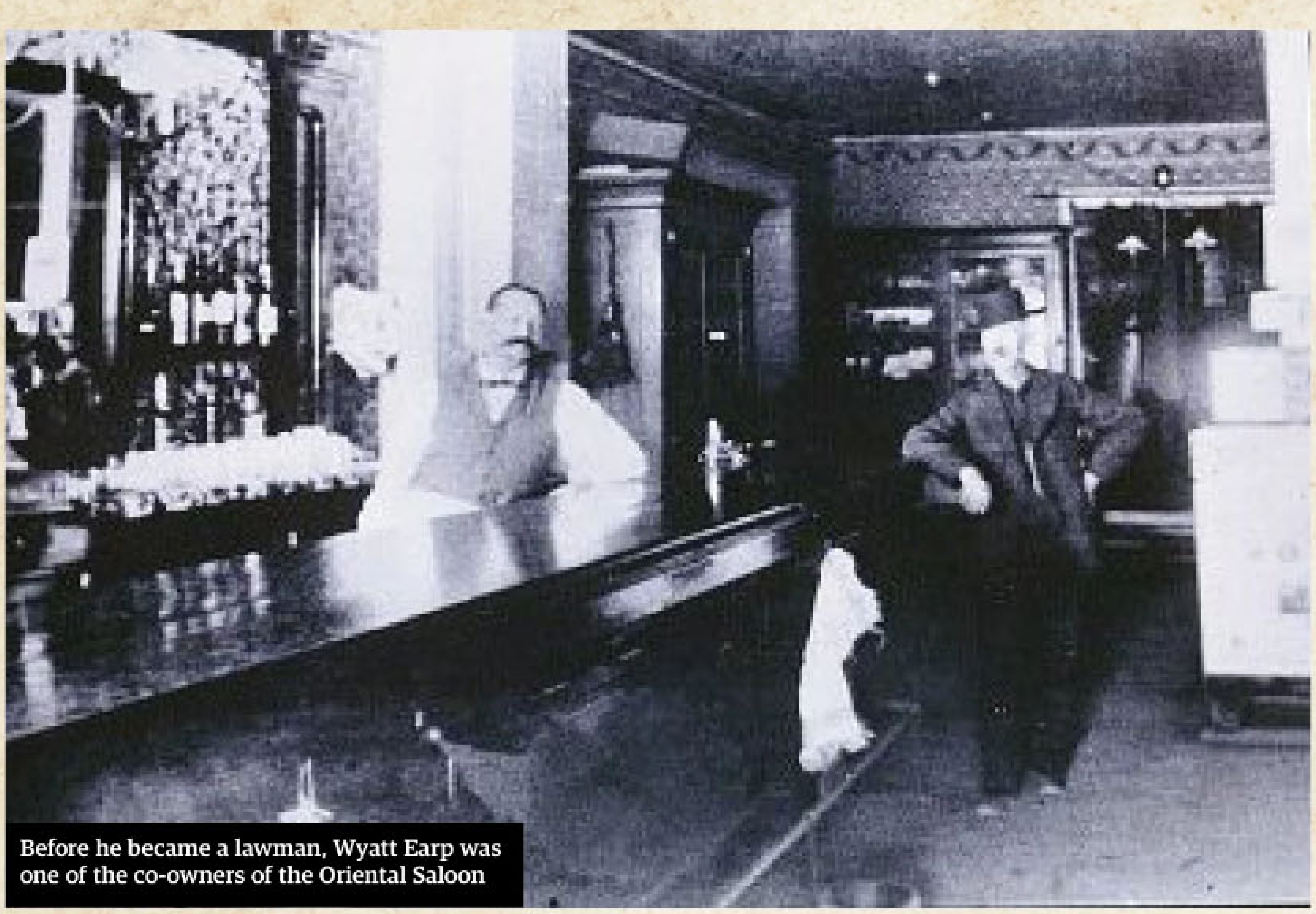


A horse thief being hanged in the American Old West

So, it had been Brocius who had orchestrated the murder. He should have known that his old enemy from the OK Corral was the mastermind behind his family's enduring misery. Wyatt and his posse saddled up their mounts and headed straight for Brocious' old prowling ground, the Whetstone Mountains.

The posse searched the surrounding area for the next two days, to no avail, eventually arriving at Iron Springs in the Whetstone Mountains. The area looked to be empty when the posse stumbled onto a group of cowboys cooking dinner alongside the spring. It took only a split-second for Wyatt to identify Brocius and, in a heartbeat, he dismounted from his horse, grabbed his double-barrelled shotgun and burst around a ridge and down into the men's camp with Texas Jack, Doc Holliday and McMaster hot on his heels. Wyatt walked toward purposefully Brocius, his long trench coat flapping behind him in the wind.

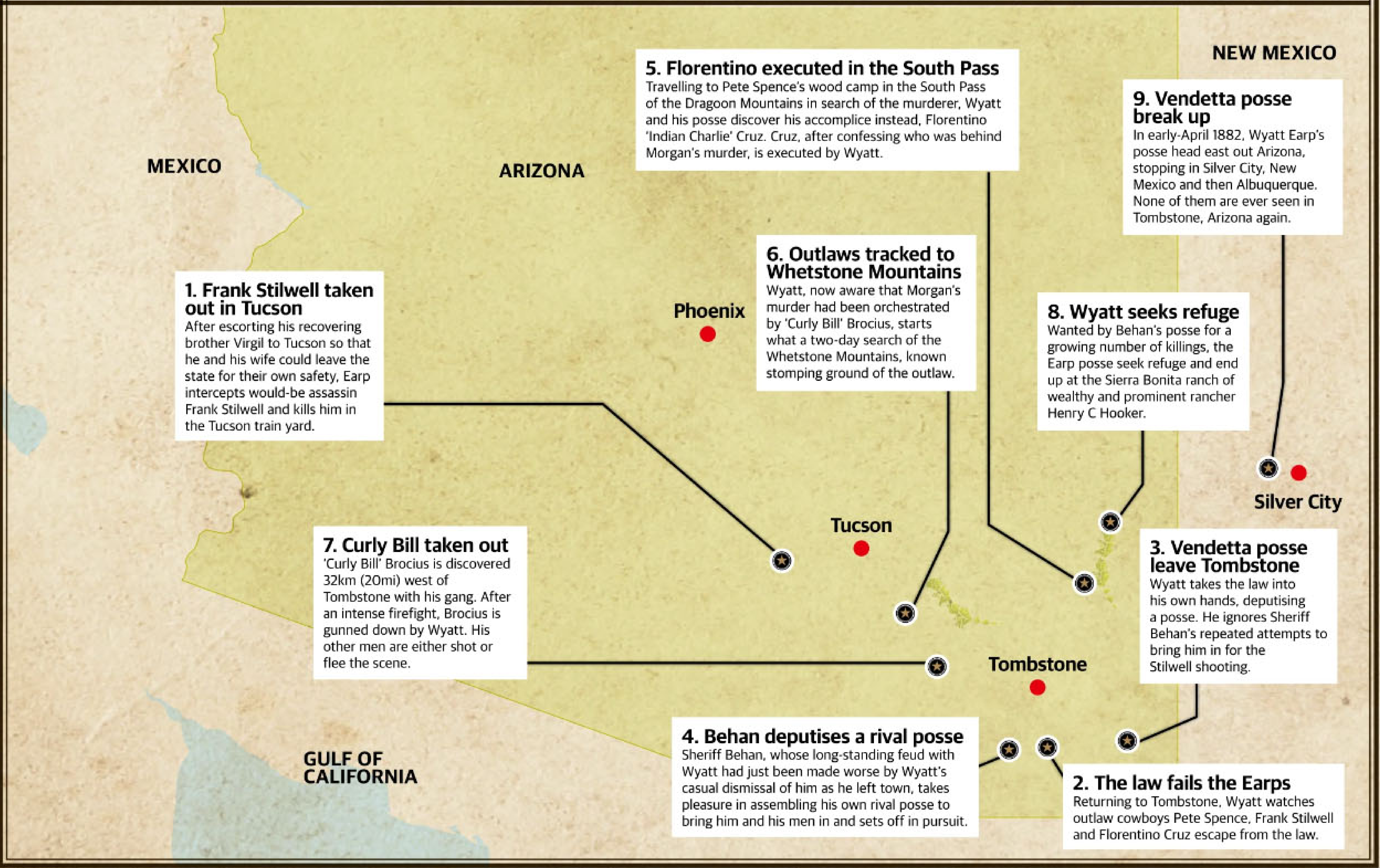
Panic broke loose in the camp, with the outlaws all scrambling for their weapons. Like a rattlesnake, Brocius weaved to his own shotgun and turned and fired at the advancing Wyatt, but missed the avenging town marshal. Texas Jack, who was sticking closely to Wyatt, drew his dual pistols and began



Before he became a lawman, Wyatt Earp was one of the co-owners of the Oriental Saloon

MAP OF THE VENDETTA RIDE

Follow the key events of Wyatt's vendetta ride



1. Frank Stilwell taken out in Tucson
After escorting his recovering brother Virgil to Tucson so that he and his wife could leave the state for their own safety, Earp intercepts would-be assassin Frank Stilwell and kills him in the Tucson train yard.

2. The law fails the Earps
Returning to Tombstone, Wyatt watches outlaw cowboys Pete Spence, Frank Stilwell and Florentino Cruz escape from the law.

3. Vendetta posse leave Tombstone
Wyatt takes the law into his own hands, deputising a posse. He ignores Sheriff Behan's repeated attempts to bring him in for the Stilwell shooting.

4. Behan deputises a rival posse
Sheriff Behan, whose long-standing feud with Wyatt had just been made worse by Wyatt's casual dismissal of him as he left town, takes pleasure in assembling his own rival posse to bring him and his men in and sets off in pursuit.

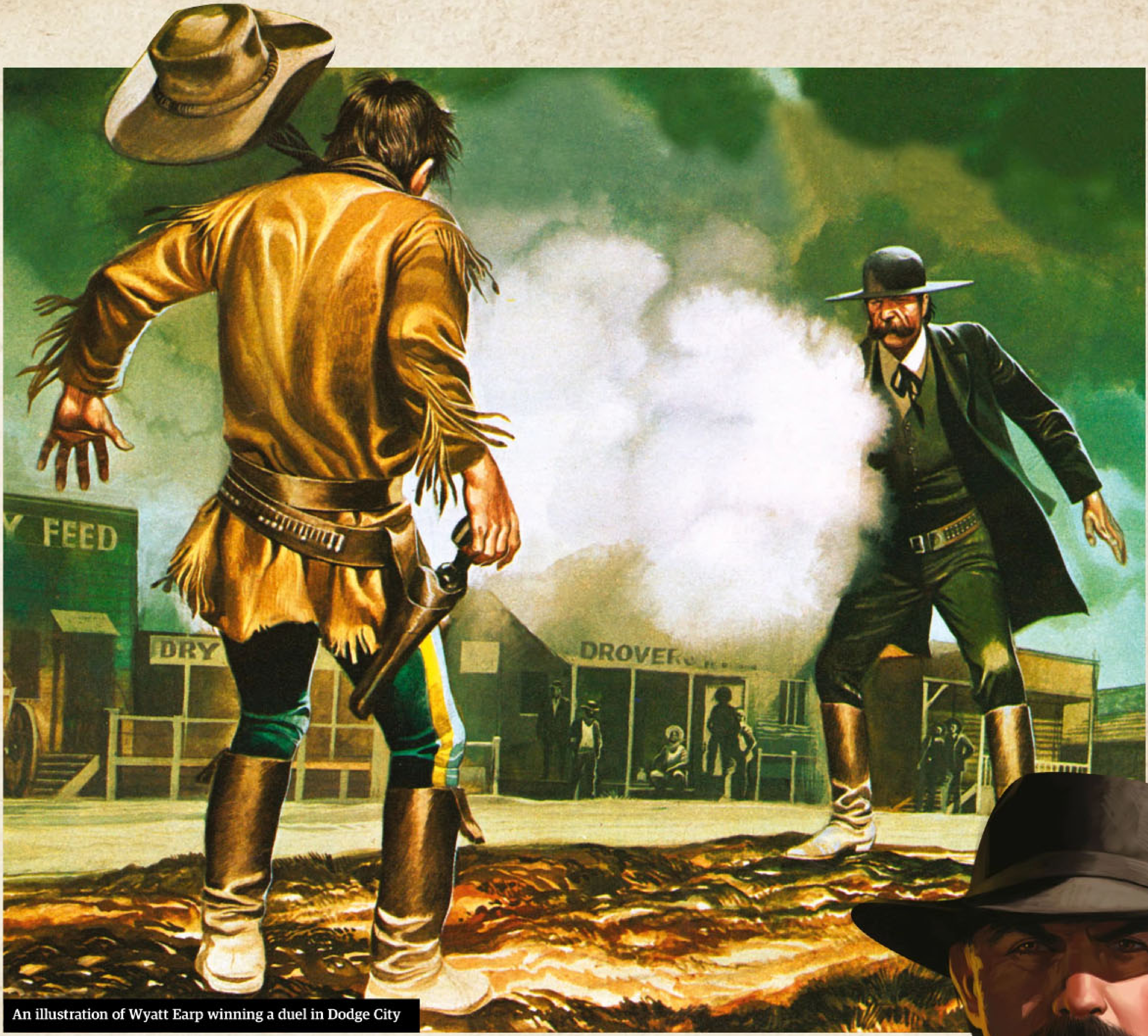
5. Florentino executed in the South Pass
Travelling to Pete Spence's wood camp in the South Pass of the Dragoon Mountains in search of the murderer, Wyatt and his posse discover his accomplice instead, Florentino 'Indian Charlie' Cruz. Cruz, after confessing who was behind Morgan's murder, is executed by Wyatt.

6. Outlaws tracked to Whetstone Mountains
Wyatt, now aware that Morgan's murder had been orchestrated by 'Curly Bill' Brocius, starts what a two-day search of the Whetstone Mountains, known stomping ground of the outlaw.

7. Curly Bill taken out
'Curly Bill' Brocius is discovered 32km (20mi) west of Tombstone with his gang. After an intense firefight, Brocius is gunned down by Wyatt. His other men are either shot or flee the scene.

8. Wyatt seeks refuge
Wanted by Behan's posse for a growing number of killings, the Earp posse seek refuge and end up at the Sierra Bonita ranch of wealthy and prominent rancher Henry C Hooker.

9. Vendetta posse break up
In early-April 1882, Wyatt Earp's posse head east out Arizona, stopping in Silver City, New Mexico and then Albuquerque. None of them are ever seen in Tombstone, Arizona again.



An illustration of Wyatt Earp winning a duel in Dodge City

"Drawing his pistol, he placed it to the side of the assassin's head and, punctuated only by a final scream, pulled the trigger"

firing at the outlaws. Brocius' men began firing back, rounds hitting Wyatt's coat and even Texas Jack's horse, which was killed instantly. Doc Holliday, McMaster and Johnson moved to cover and started shooting; while Texas Jack, after exhausting all the rounds in his pistols, dashed to his fallen horse in an attempt to retrieve his rifle.

During the chaos, Wyatt Earp had never taken his eyes off Brocius and calmly advanced on the killer. Time slowed and, with an unshakable purpose, Wyatt raised his shotgun, aimed directly at Brocius at point-blank range, and watched as the killer of his brother was blown in two. Seeing their leader dead, the rest of Brocius' party fled for their lives, but not before Wyatt had continued his vengeful rampage by killing Johnny Barnes with a gunshot round to the chest and wounding Milt Hicks with another shot.

The rest of Wyatt Earp's vendetta ride ran its course in the only way it could. Wanted by the law, Wyatt and his posse could not return to Tombstone. As such, after making a couple of stops at safe houses, most of his posse headed east out of Arizona, riding out of the state with the Sun on their backs. Behan never did catch them and after arriving in Albuquerque, New Mexico, they went their separate ways. Vengeance had been delivered with a efficiency and brutality that would permanently affect the lives of all the men involved and cement their reputation as legendary figures. Justice – Wild West style – had been served.

10 DEADLIEST GUNSLINGERS IN THE WEST

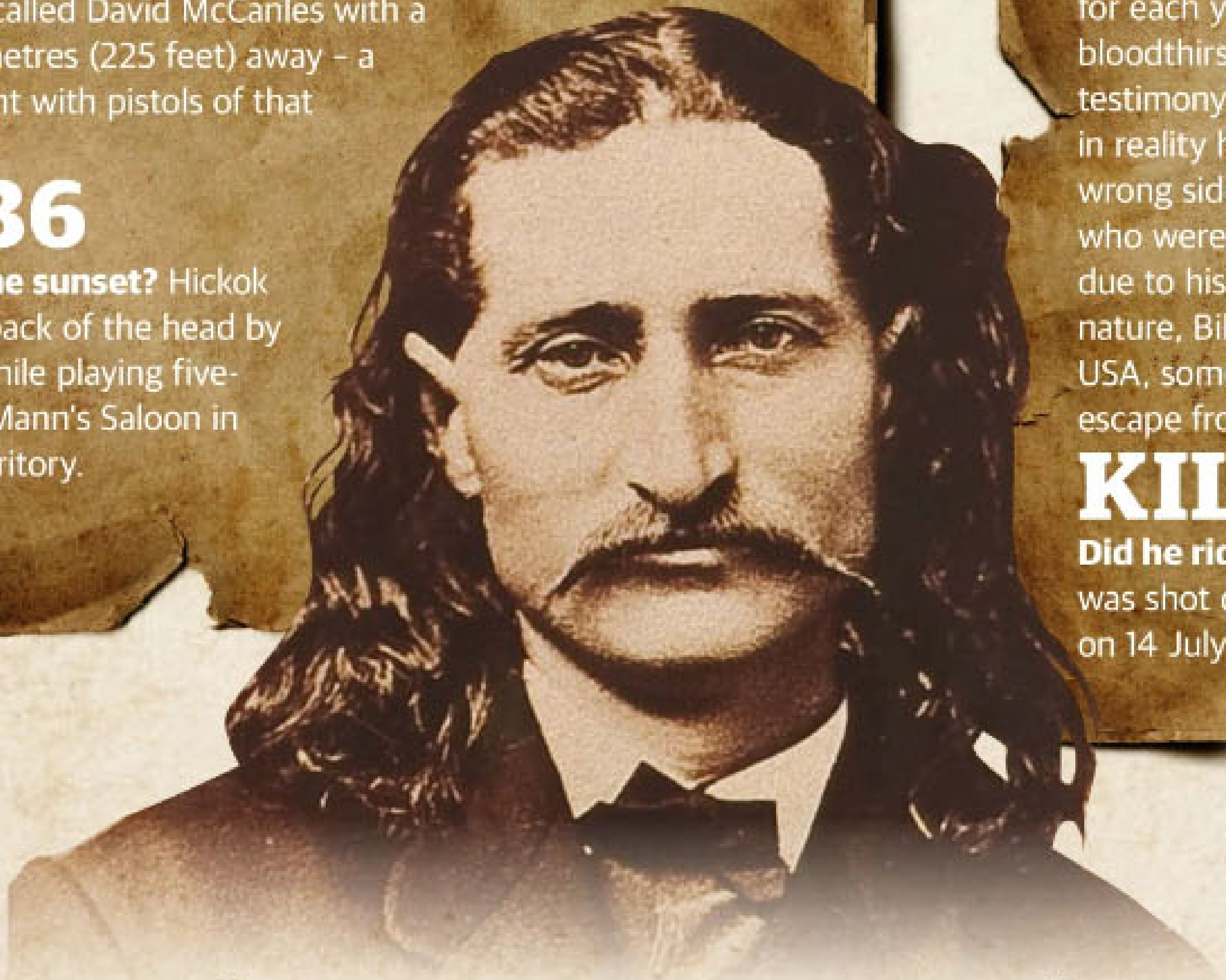
JAMES 'WILD BILL' HICKOK

1837-1876

Wild Bill Hickok – real name James Butler Hickok – was the best sharpshooter and gunfighter of his day. Famously, Hickok was involved in the first-ever recorded quick-draw duel, with him gunning down a gambler called Davis Tutt Jr in the town square of Springfield, Missouri. Hickok is also recorded as shooting an outlaw called David McCanles with a single bullet from 69 metres (225 feet) away – a remarkable achievement with pistols of that time.

KILLS: 36

Did he ride off into the sunset? Hickok was shot through the back of the head by gambler Jack McCall while playing five-card draw at Nuttal & Mann's Saloon in Deadwood, Dakota Territory.



BILLY THE KID

1859-1881

The gunslinger – real name William H Bonney – killed many men during his short lifetime, with many saying it was 21, one kill for each year of his life. Often depicted as a bloodthirsty raving killer of a man, surviving testimony from people who knew him said in reality he just repeatedly ended up on the wrong side of the tracks, killing other men who were worse than himself. Regardless, due to his excellent marksmanship and wily nature, Billy became infamous across the USA, something only exacerbated by a daring escape from jail and years spent on the run.

KILLS: 15-26

Did he ride off into the sunset? Bonney was shot dead by Sheriff Pat Garrett on 14 July 1881.

> "Within one year Stoudenmire had killed six men in shoot-outs and executed a would-be assassin"

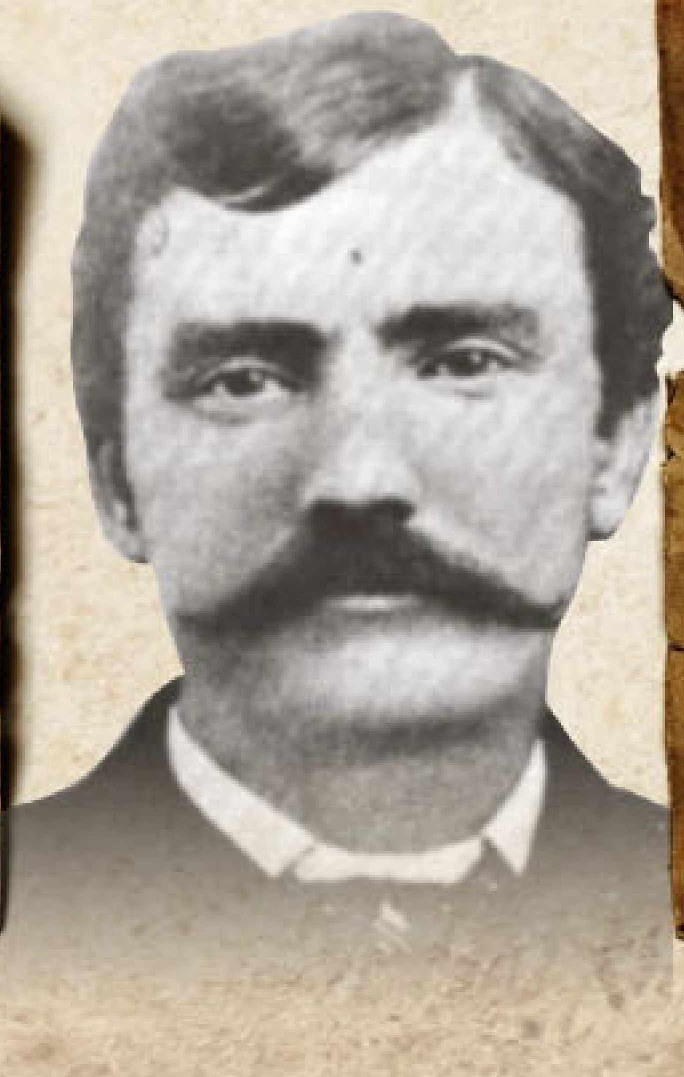
JOHN WESLEY HARDIN

1853-1895

Hardin had his first kill registered at the tender age of 15 and his life consisted of a series of run-ins with outlaws and lawmen alike. While Hardin was known as a good shot, it was his cunning in combat that earned him a deadly reputation, often killing men after confrontations in cold-blooded, unseen ways. His most famous kill was Sheriff John Helms on 1 August 1873. Hardin was eventually captured and spent 17 years in Huntsville Prison before being released on 17 February 1894.

KILLS: 27-42

Did he ride off into the sunset? Hardin was shot through the back of the head in the Acme Saloon, Texas, by lawman John Selman Sr on 19 August 1895.



KING FISHER

1854-1884

Fisher was a celebrated gunslinger, racking up double-digit kills by the age of 30. He was known to carry twin ivory-handled pistols and to dress in bright-coloured clothes. His most memorable trait, though, was his brutality in combat. The most famous example of this was in his fight with a rival bunch of Mexican cowboys, clubbing one to death with a branding iron, outdrawing and shooting another and then executing the remaining two.

KILLS: 14

Did he ride off into the sunset? Fisher was shot 13 times at a theatre in San Antonio, Texas, in a revenge killing.

TOM HORN

1860-1903

Horn was at one time a lawman, scout, soldier, hired gunman, assassin and outlaw, fluidly shifting from one side of the law to the other. During his eventful life, Horn reportedly garnered fame for his tracking abilities, bringing many outlaws to justice and then, once his appetite for blood became too problematic – he was linked to the unlawful murder of 17 people – he had to turn to mercenary work, fulfilling contract killings with brutal efficiency. His legacy of murder only came to a close when he was captured after his killing of a 14-year-old boy in 1901.

KILLS: 35-50

Did he ride off into the sunset? Horn was captured, tried and hanged in Cheyenne, Wyoming, on 20 November 1903.

JESSE JAMES

1847-1882

Along with his brother Frank, Jesse led a gang that robbed banks, trains and stagecoaches. Before turning to crime, Jesse had been a guerilla fighter in the Confederate Army, but when the Union triumphed in the American Civil War, he was left disenchanted. James famously shot a clerk while holding up the Daviess County Savings Association bank in Gallatin, Missouri, living permanently on the run along with his gang from the event until his death. After James' death rumours spread that he had survived, but there is no evidence to suggest this was true. Frank James, on the other hand, slipped the noose, living to the age of 72 and dying years later in 1915.

KILLS: 1-5

Did he ride off into the sunset? James was shot through the back of the head by fellow outlaw Robert Ford – who hoped to cash in on his bounty – on 3 April 1882.

CHEROKEE BILL

1876-1896

The outlaw actually called Crawford Goldsby was known for his fast and itchy trigger finger. In a period of two years from the age of 18, Bill along with his gang robbed, pillaged, maimed and killed anyone who stood in their way, with Goldsby earning the reputation of one of the meanest outlaws of the Old West. Goldsby even shot and killed his own brother-in-law Mose Brown in an argument over a simple bunch of hogs. Despite the terror he inflicted, two years later he was caught and imprisoned, later going on to hang for his various crimes.

KILLS: 7

Did he ride off into the sunset? At the age of just 20, Goldsby was hanged as a convicted murderer at Fort Smith, Arkansas.

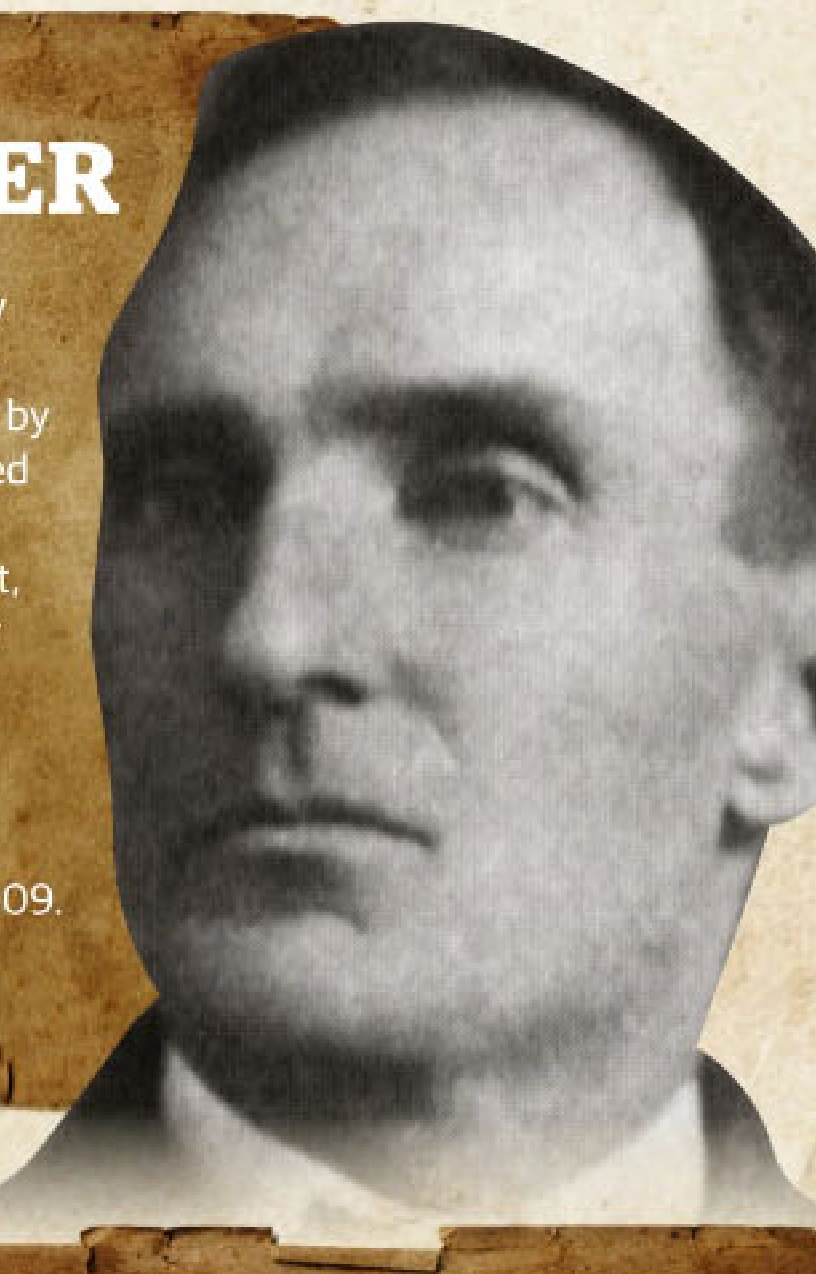
JIM 'KILLER' MILLER

1866-1909

Legend has it that Miller survived more duels than any pother person. The most famous duel was with Pecos Sheriff George A 'Bud' Frazer, where Miller was set on by Frazer and shot four times in the chest. He gang rushed him to a doctor where it was revealed he had been wearing a steel plate under his clothes across his chest, which saved his life. Two years later, he tracked Frazer down and executed him with a shotgun.

KILLS: 14

Did he ride off into the sunset? Miller was dragged from prison and hanged by a lynch mob on 19 April 1909.



ROBERT CLAY ALLISON

1840-1887

While Allison did not rack up the largest body count in the Old West, the way in which he killed was brutal. Allison cut the head off a man and displayed it on a pole outside a saloon, hung another publicly after gunning him down over a minor disagreement and executed many others with point-blank headshots. On 7 January 1874, Allison accepted an invitation to eat with a known gunman called Chunk Colbert, despite knowing that Colbert was trying to kill him. While eating the meal, Colbert tried to draw on Allison, however he was too slow and shot through the head by Clay.

KILLS: 6

Did he ride off into the sunset? Allison fell from a wagon and broke his neck on 3 July 1887.

DALLAS STOUDENMIRE

1845-1882

Stoudenmire was one of the most feared gunslingers of his day, with him ruling the rough and violent city of El Paso, Texas, with an iron fist. Shortly after arriving in El Paso, Stoudenmire would be involved in one of the most famous gunfights of the American Old West – the Four Dead in Five Seconds shoot-out. Within one year Stoudenmire had killed six men in shoot-outs and executed a would-be assassin – the latter sent to hell with eight gunshot wounds.

KILLS: 10

Did he ride off into the sunset? His luck ran out in 1882 when he was shot to death in a shoot-out.

© Joe Cummings; Corbis; Peter Scott/The Art Agency/ Thinkstock; Map of Arizona by FreeVectorMaps.com

BUFFALO BILL CODY

Buffalo Bill was America's first great showman. He didn't just come from the Wild West – he invented it

In the mid-to-late 1800s, the United States of America was a young country. Obviously its indigenous population had been there for millennia, but when the settlers moved west in search of land, gold and freedom, a whole new nation was born. It had no history to call its own, and so immediately set about creating a new mythological heritage. The first 'Western' movie was one of the first films ever made: generally acknowledged to be 1903's *The Great Train Robbery*. A fundamental figure in the rapid transition between the historical West and the legends of the 'Wild West' was Buffalo Bill. He took his genuine experiences of life on the frontier and transformed them into showbusiness.

William Frederick Cody was born in Iowa on 26 February 1846. His father, Isaac, was a farmer and his mother, Mary, was a schoolteacher. In 1854 the family, like many others of the time, moved west to Kansas to seek new opportunities on the frontier. Sadly, the dream was short-lived for Isaac. The American Civil War was only a few years away, and the question of slavery was a cause of great division within society. Isaac spoke out against slavery at a public meeting in 1857, and was attacked by a mob that disagreed with him. He never fully recovered from his injuries and died not long afterwards.

DEFINING MOMENT

The Utah War

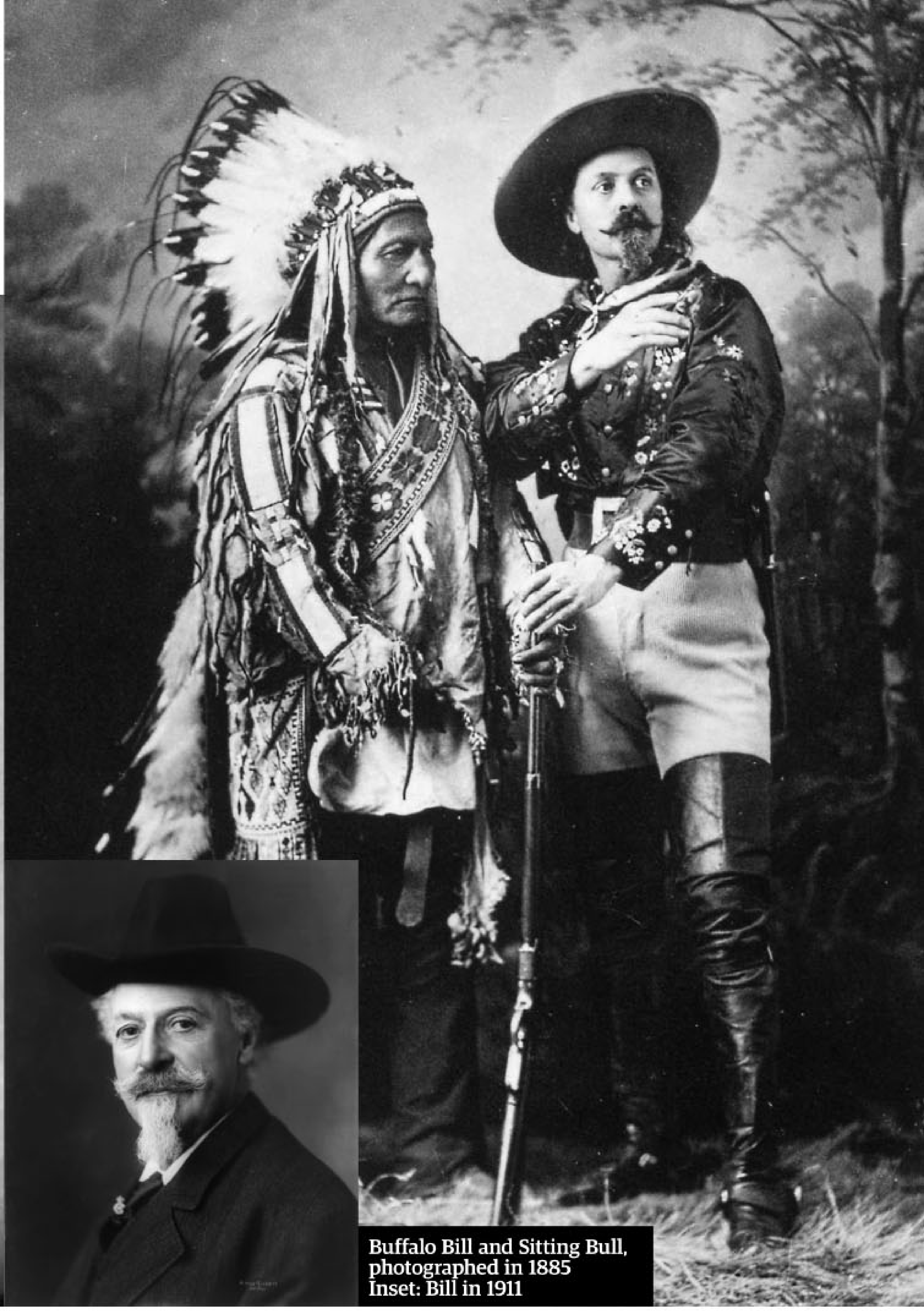
The Utah War was between the US Government and Mormon settlers taking a stand against persecution. Bill claimed his lifelong career as an "Indian Fighter" began here when, as an army scout aged 11, he killed a Sioux who was shooting at his compatriots. "From that time forward I became a hero," he boasted in his autobiography.

May 1857- Jul 1858

Times were hard following Isaac's loss, and young Bill, aged just 11, was forced to find work to support his family. His first job was with a freight carrying company, riding on horseback carrying messages up and down the wagon trains between the workmen and the drivers. He also spent time as an army scout in Utah: a period during which he claimed to have killed his first 'Indian'. But his real adventures – and the beginnings of his own legend – started when, at the age of 14, he signed on as a rider for the Pony Express.

The Pony Express was, for a short time before the invention of the telegraph, America's quickest and most direct means of communication: it could get a

Bill with paraphernalia, circa 1892



Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull, photographed in 1885
Inset: Bill in 1911

message via horse and rider, between the east and west coasts in about ten days. It was not, however, a job for the faint-hearted. "Wanted," ran one of its recruitment posters, "Young, skinny, wiry fellows, not over 18, must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred." The pay was $25 a week.

Bill seized the opportunity, and for the next couple of years undertook dangerous journeys on many occasions, all in the service of getting the mail delivered. One such quest saw him make a record-setting ride covering 518 kilometres with 21 horses. At least, that was Bill's story later in life. Others claimed that he never really rode further than five kilometres.

DEFINING MOMENT

The man, the myth

Bill met writer Ned Buntline in 1869, and Buntline started turning Bill into a pulp hero. He wrote four novels featuring Bill: *The King Of The Bordermen*, *Buffalo Bill's Best Shot*, *Buffalo Bill's Last Victory*, and *Hazel Eye the Girl Trapper*. He also wrote the play, *Scouts of the Prairie*, where Bill played himself. The first Western star was born.

1869-1872

A stint in the Kansas Cavalry followed, although he was too young to fight in the Civil War. He was discharged in 1865, and married in 1866, for a while running an inn in Kansas with his new wife, Louisa. Sedentary domestic life wasn't for him, however, and he rode out west again, hiring himself out for a couple of years as a scout, guide and frontiersman.

It was during this time that he earned his famous nickname, from shooting thousands of buffalo to supply meat for the workers building the Kansas Pacific Railroad. He's reputed to have killed well over 4,000 buffalo in just 18 months with his Springfield Model 1866 service rifle (which he called 'Lucretia Borgia').

By 1868 he was back in the army, serving as chief of scouts in the Third Cavalry, and taking part in several violent campaigns against the Native Americans over the next four years. Again there are tall tales of superhuman rides over incredible distances to deliver dispatches, but it's certainly true that Bill was awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry in 1872. He claimed to have killed a Sioux chief called Tall Bull and scalped a Cheyenne chief called Yellow Hand. He would embellish and dramatise the latter encounter in particular for decades to come.

The man that helped him with those embellishments was Ned Buntline, perhaps the most important person in the establishment of the Buffalo Bill legend – apart from Bill himself.

Buntline was a prolific author of 'dime' novels: cheap pulp magazines of lurid tall stories, very popular in the eastern United States, for whom the West was exotically distant. Buntline met Bill in 1869, and while Bill's name was already somewhat known, Buntline made him nationally famous with his first book about him; *Buffalo Bill, King Of The Border Men*. Buntline wrote a further three Buffalo Bill novels and a play, but others took up the baton. Another dime novel author, Prentiss Ingraham, wrote 121 Buffalo Bill novels: 23 in 1896 alone. In total, Bill was the protagonist of 557 separate dime novels during his lifetime, detailing far more exploits than he could possibly have lived.

Bill saw Buntline's play (based on the first book) in New York in 1872 during his first trip east. Buntline subsequently persuaded him to take to the stage himself, and Bill made his debut as an actor in Buntline's *Scouts Of The Prairie* in December of the same year. For the next decade he divided his time between appearing on stage and scouting on the plains and prairies. In 1876 he was even part of the campaign that saw General Custer's last stand. And while Bill wasn't personally at the Battle of Little

Bighorn… his fans could still have read about his heroism there nevertheless. In an effort to draw a distinction between the more-or-less fictional Buffalo Bill and the real William Cody, Bill actually wrote his own autobiography in 1879, but his love of mythmaking and self-aggrandisement meant that it was hardly more reliable than the dime books already published.

His flair for drama saw him perform in any number of plays depicting action-packed life and death on the frontier, and in 1882 he organised an extravaganza for the 4 July Independence Day celebrations, including rodeo riding, horseback and sharp-shooting exhibitions. This provided the template for the show that made him world famous – Buffalo Bill's Wild West – which included dramatised stagecoach robberies, buffalo hunts, cattle roundups, and battles with Indians. Characters like 'Little Sure Shot' Annie Oakley and 'King of the Cowboys' Buck Taylor demonstrated incredible skill in areas like gunplay and lassoing. Insisting the show was educational, Bill gradually internationalised its cast, adding Mexican vaqueros, Argentine gauchos, and Russian Cossacks. Genuine American Indians weren't averse to appearing for Bill either: even the famous Lakota chief Sitting Bull joined the company for a season.

Bill promoted the show in his typical style, describing it as "the grandest, most realistic and overwhelmingly thrilling spectacle ever seen", and the millions of people who bought tickets clearly didn't feel short-changed. In 1887 Bill took the show further afield, travelling with it internationally, and performing in England for Queen Victoria's golden jubilee. She was so impressed she requested an encore performance. Six months in the UK followed, during which Bill and his company performed to 30,000 people a day. They travelled to mainland Europe for more of the same in 1889.

Bill also began appearing in silent movies as soon as the technology arrived. Many were simply documents of the show, but 1914's *The Indian Wars* saw him playing himself in a big production about the 1890 Battle of Wounded Knee (in which the 7th Cavalry massacred the Sioux). He managed to crowbar his fight with Yellow Hand into the narrative. The film is one of many from the silent era thought to be lost, but footage of Bill from other early productions does still exist. Other actors to have played him in more recent years include Charlton Heston and Paul Newman.

As great a showman as he was, however, Bill was less effective as a businessman. He certainly made a lot of money, but found it difficult to keep hold of it. Poor investments saw him bankrupted and compelled to join forces with rival shows like 'Pawnee Bill' Lillie's. His health, like his finances, also deteriorated, and he died in January 1917, surrounded by his family while visiting his sister in Denver.

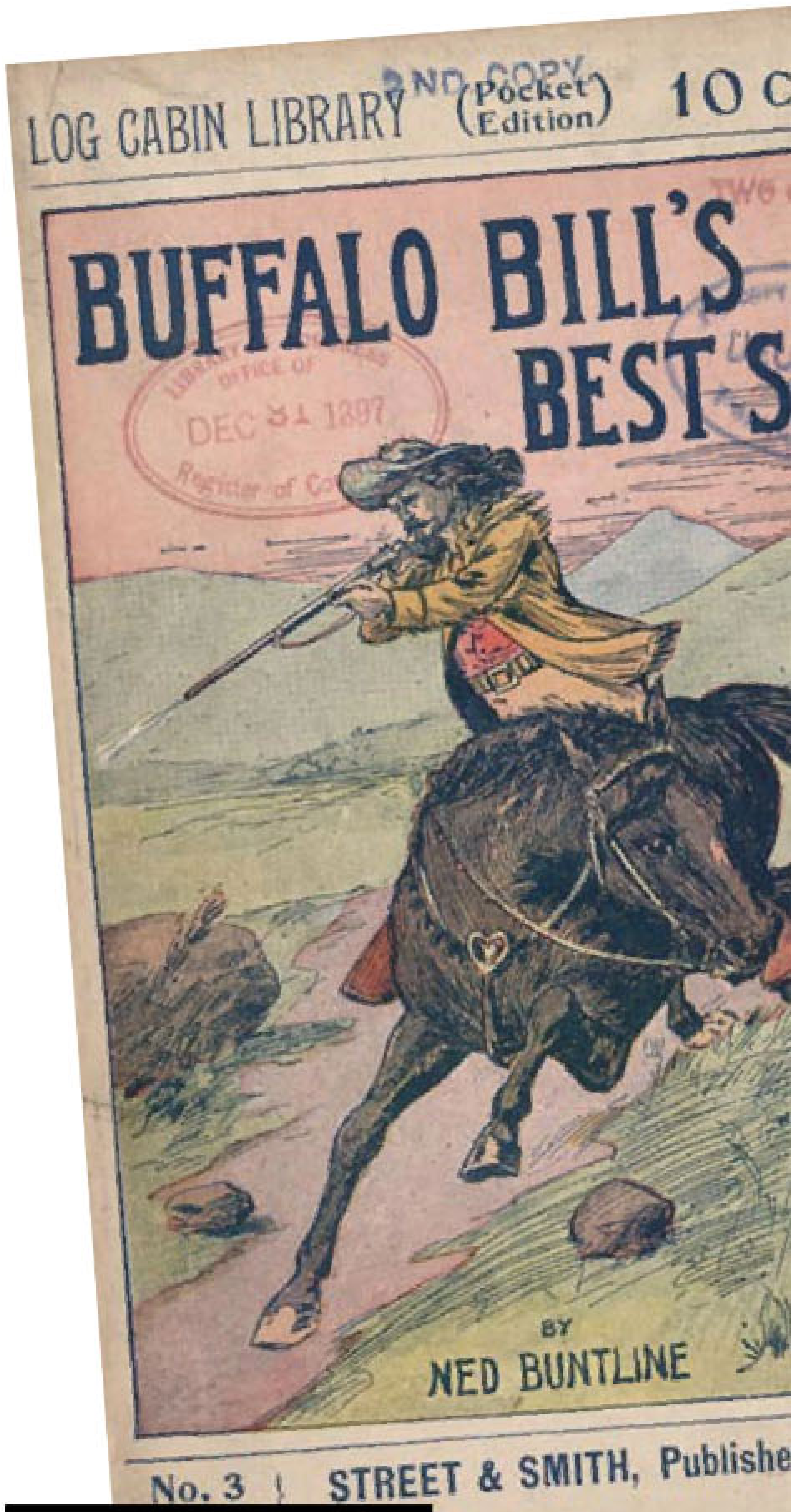
Tributes poured in from across the world, including from President Woodrow Wilson and Kaiser Wilhelm II. His grave is on Lookout Mountain in Golden, Colorado, and the town of Cody, Wyoming is named in his honour. It's far from his only lasting contribution to the way we still perceive the American West.

DEFINING MOMENT

The old glory blowout

This was an Independence Day celebration organised by Bill in North Platte, Nebraska. The extravaganza included rodeo competitions and horseback riding exhibitions, and its success convinced him of the viability of a touring Wild West show. The lavish spectacle he went on to organise used 300 head of livestock and 200 actors.

4 JULY 1882



***Buffalo Bill's Best Shot* by Ned Buntline – only 10 cents!**

Author extraordinaire Ned Buntline, photographed sometime before 1886

★ Annie Oakley ★

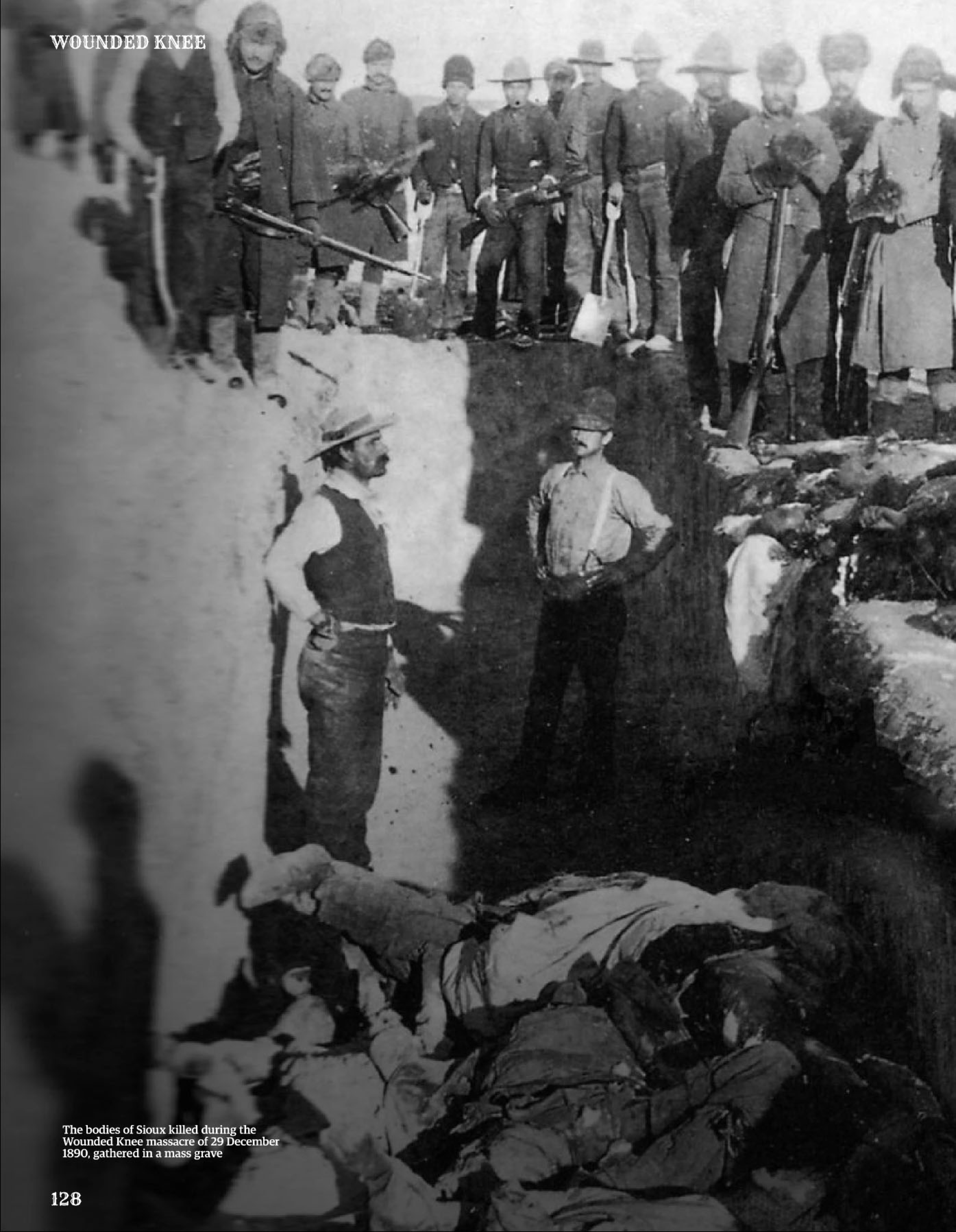
Annie Oakley was the stage name of Phoebe Ann Moses. She was born in Ohio in 1860, and the only time she was ever in the 'Wild West' was when she toured through it with Buffalo Bill's show. Thanks to Bill's mythmaking, however, she came to represent the embodiment of the gutsy Western heroine.

While her history was made up, there was no arguing over her skill with a firearm. She could shoot a cigarette out of a man's mouth, and blow multiple targets out of the air from on foot, horseback, or even a bicycle. She could shoot backwards over both shoulders using mirrors, and even being in a train wreck in 1901 didn't stop her: she somehow carried on her energetic act wearing a leg brace and using a cane. The Lakota chief Sitting Bull – also a part of Buffalo Bill's touring show for a while – gave her the nickname 'Watanya Cicilla', meaning 'Little Sure Shot'.

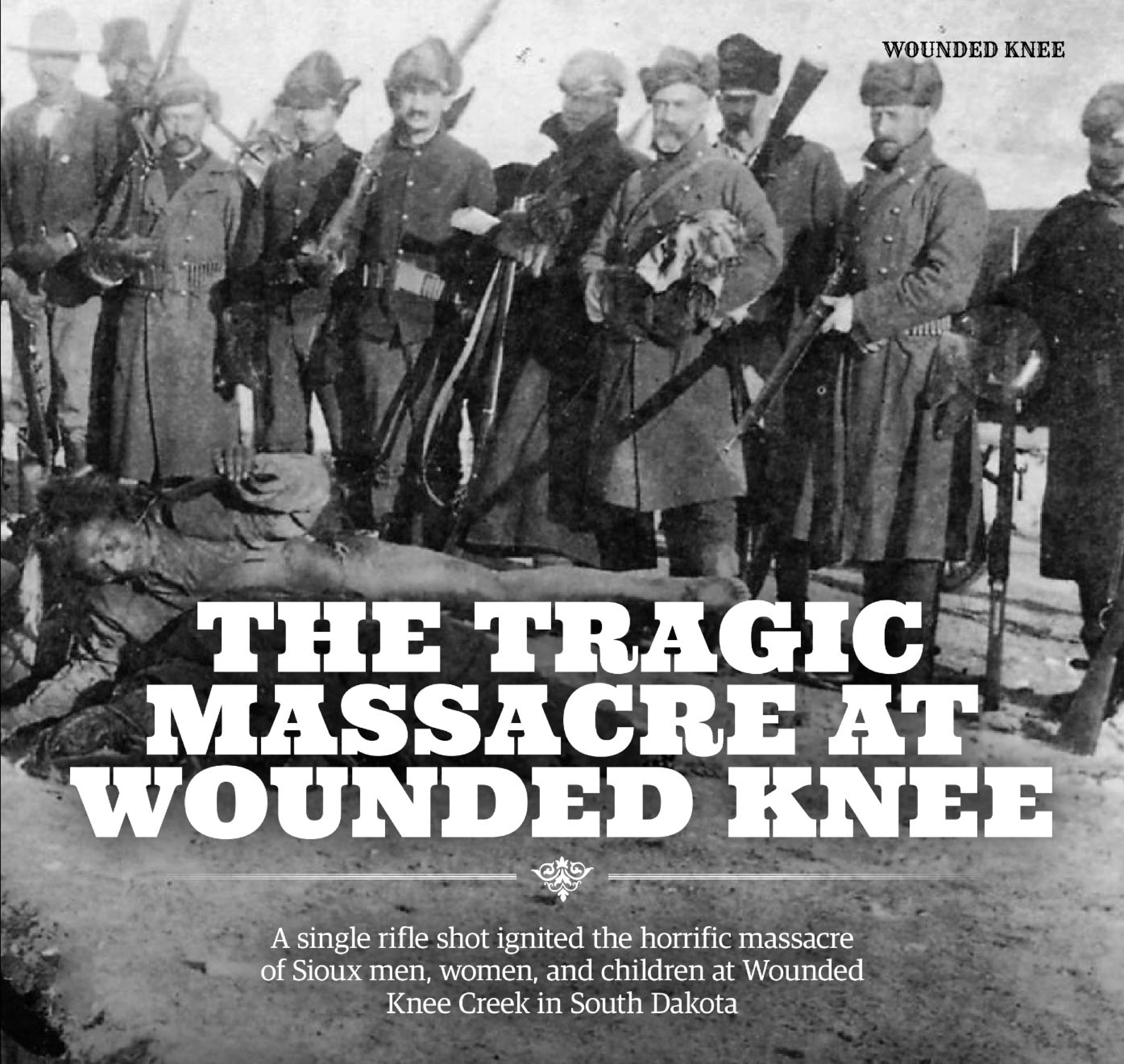
She outlived Bill and continued performing until the 1920s, cutting the peculiar figure of a gun-toting, crack-shot little old lady. She accrued a fortune during her life, and spent it all on her family and on philanthropic causes including women's rights charities. She died from anaemia in 1926. Her husband of 50 years (and partner in performances), Frank Butler, died just 18 days later.

Annie Oakley in later life (1922). The gun she's holding was a present from Bill

©Thinkstock; Wiki: Library of Congress; Prints & Photographs Division



The bodies of Sioux killed during the Wounded Knee massacre of 29 December 1890, gathered in a mass grave



THE TRAGIC MASSACRE AT WOUNDED KNEE

A single rifle shot ignited the horrific massacre of Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee Creek in South Dakota

The buffalo had been hunted to near extinction, treaties with the United States government had been violated, and the proud Native Americans of the Great Plains, relegated to reservations, were dependent on agents of that very government for their survival. By the winter of 1890, the fortunes of the Sioux, Cheyenne, Paiute, and other tribes had reached a new low. Perhaps only the intervention of their gods could right the wrongs that had been done to them.

The hope of such intervention was exactly what Paiute shaman, or holy man, Wovoka offered. A new mystic movement began to rise among the people, and Wovoka was not only its messenger, he proclaimed himself to be the messiah, saviour of the Native American people. He preached that they should return to their old way of life, discontinuing any embrace of the white man's ways. If they did, the dead would rise, the earth would return to its natural, verdant state. Game would once again be plentiful, and the vast prairie would be open and welcoming of their nomadic wanderings.

To hasten the restoration of the old order, Wovoka preached that the Indians should dance the ghost dance, a slow, rhythmic ritual to the beat of a single drum. Some of the dancers donned shirts that bore images of the buffalo and other sacred wildlife. These shirts, it was believed, were impervious to bullets fired from the white man's rifles.

Wovoka's followers grew in number and spread from Paiute villages to neighbouring tribes. In the autumn of 1890, the Lakota Sioux sent envoys to the shaman to learn the ghost dance. They brought the rite back to the Sioux settlements.

The mysticism of the ghost dance and the revival of Indian fervour alarmed the white settlers, including the agents of the federal government who were responsible for Indian affairs. At the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, the local agent telegraphed his concerns to Washington, DC. "Indians are dancing in the snow and are wild and crazy," he warned. "We need protection, and we need it now. The leaders should be arrested and confined at some military post until the matter is quieted, and this should be done now."

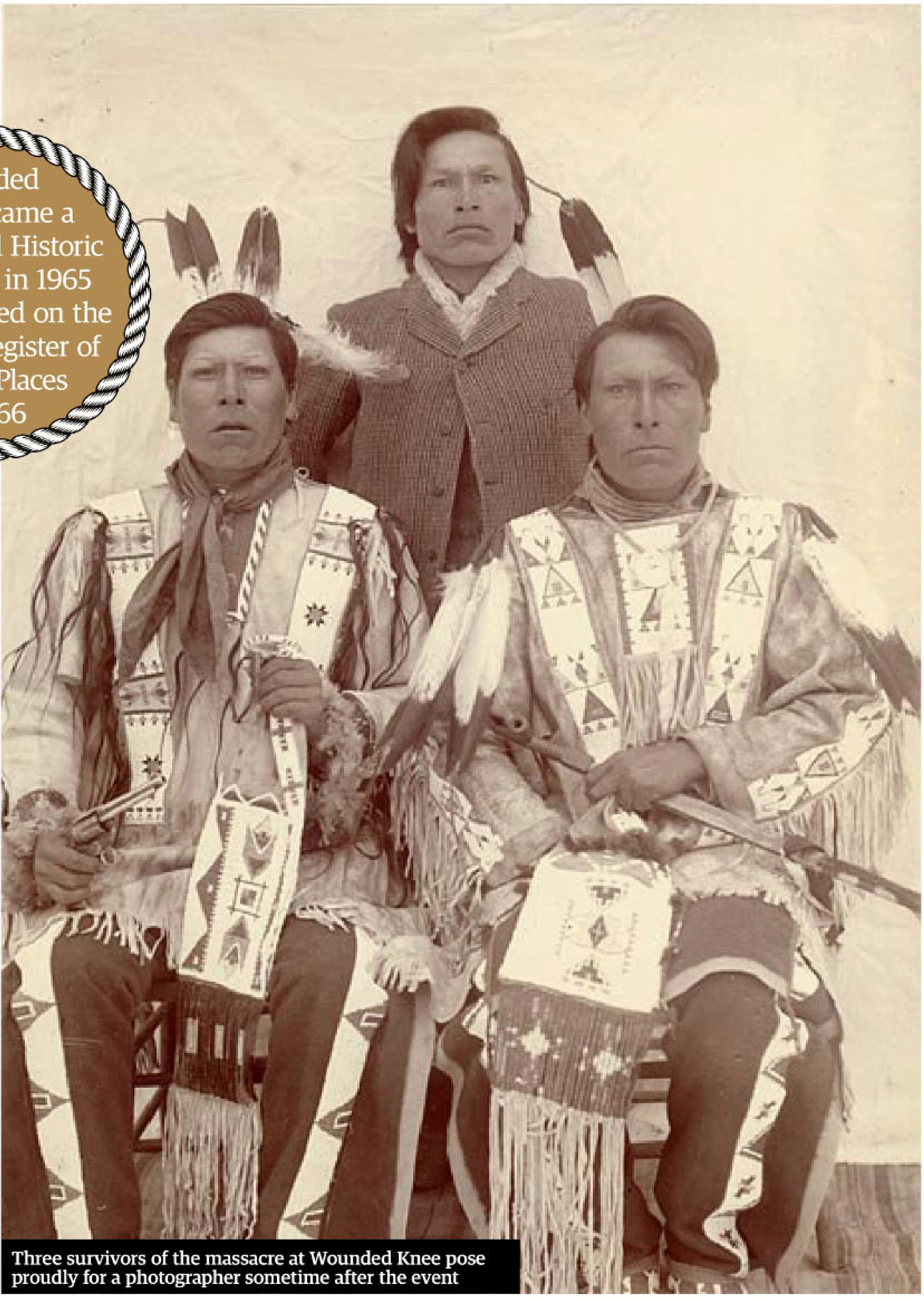
While every agent or officer of the US Army in Indian territory did not share the same concern, measures were taken to quell the prospects of an uprising and to ensure the safety of the settlers of the plains. The authorities believed that Sitting Bull, a revered Sioux holy man of the Hunkpapa band who had led warriors in the victory over Lieutenant Colonel George Custer and the 7th Cavalry Regiment at Little Bighorn years earlier, might lend his support to the burgeoning ghost dance phenomenon and moved to take him into custody.

Wounded Knee became a US National Historic Landmark in 1965 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966

It was initially hoped that William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody might persuade Sitting Bull to surrender peacefully. However, Indian Agent James McLaughlin insisted that Native American police make the arrest. On 15 December 1890, about 40 Native American officers went to Sitting Bull's home at Standing Rock Reservation. A crowd gathered to demonstrate against the arrest, and a shot rang out as Sitting Bull tried to pull away from one of the arresting officers, who was killed instantly. More shots were fired, and Sitting Bull ended up being mortally wounded by police officers Bull Head and Red Tomahawk.

The death of Sitting Bull stirred fear among the Sioux at Standing Rock, and about 200 fled toward the Cheyenne River Reservation where Chief Spotted Elk, also known as Big Foot, was located with his Miniconjou band. On 23 December, Spotted Elk and approximately 350 Miniconjou and Hunkpapa set out for the Pine Ridge Reservation, where the great chief Red Cloud might offer sanctuary and leadership during the turbulent period.

As they made their way slowly toward Pine Ridge, Spotted Elk's small company, which probably included about 200 women and children, was intercepted near Porcupine Butte on 28 December by a detachment of the 7th Cavalry under Major Samuel Whitside. The cavalrymen diverted the Sioux to the banks of Wounded Knee Creek about eight kilometres to the west, where they were told to make camp. That evening, Colonel James Forsyth, commander of the 7th Cavalry, arrived with the remainder of the regiment.


Three survivors of the massacre at Wounded Knee pose proudly for a photographer sometime after the event

Approximately 500 troopers surrounded the Indians on the morning of the 29th, and Forsyth ordered the soldiers to confiscate their weapons and move them toward trains to take them out of an area that had been designated a zone of military operations. A search of the camp turned up 38 rifles, but it was clear that some of the Sioux were reluctant to part with their guns. While the elderly Spotted Elk, already seriously ill with pneumonia, and a few other Sioux negotiated with Forsyth, a shot was heard in the camp. Violence erupted.

Eyewitness accounts vary, but one explanation of the unfolding tragedy asserts that a deaf Sioux brave named Black Coyote refused to part with his rifle, either because he could not understand the orders he was given or because he had paid a large sum of money for it. As Black Coyote wrestled with soldiers, another Sioux, Yellow Bird, incited the gathering to resist. At least one ghost dancer began performing the ritual, tossing dirt into the air, and the soldiers probably considered the act a provocation.

In the midst of Black Coyote's scuffle with the soldiers, it is believed by many that his rifle discharged. At that moment, some witnesses attested that at least five Sioux braves pulled rifles from beneath blankets and fired at 7th Cavalry troopers. The response was swift. The soldiers started firing into the surrounded Sioux, and four 42mm Model 1875 Hotchkiss mountain guns began blasting away. More braves drew weapons while their women and children fled toward a nearby ravine. Within seconds, officers lost control of their men, and the indiscriminate shooting continued. Soldiers on horseback chased Indians who ran from the melee, while many were shot where they stood amid the deadly crossfire.

Philip Wells, an Army scout of mixed blood, witnessed the unfolding massacre and recalled, "I heard someone on my left exclaim, 'Look out! Look out!' I saw five or six young warriors cast off their blankets and pull guns out from under them and brandish them in the air. One of the warriors shot into the soldiers, who were ordered to fire into the Indians."

Captain George D Wallace, commanding Troop K, 7th Cavalry, was killed early in the fight. "A bullet, striking him in the forehead, plowed away the top of his head," remembered Wells.

General Nelson A Miles, commander of the Military Division of the Missouri, advanced the story of Black Coyote and the accidental rifle shot but added, "a large number of women and children who tried to escape by running and scattering over the prairie were hunted down and killed."

Sitting Bull and a band of 20 Sioux braves made appearances in William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody's celebrated Wild West Show

The body of Sioux leader Spotted Elk lies frozen in the snow after he was killed during the massacre at Wounded Knee

While Wells' account is that of an eyewitness, it is likely that there was culpability on both sides. The tension was high, and in the heat of the confrontation an accidental discharge of a weapon does appear as the likely catalyst. Certainly, it is questionable whether the Sioux, surrounded, outgunned, and with many women and children, would have initiated a battle.

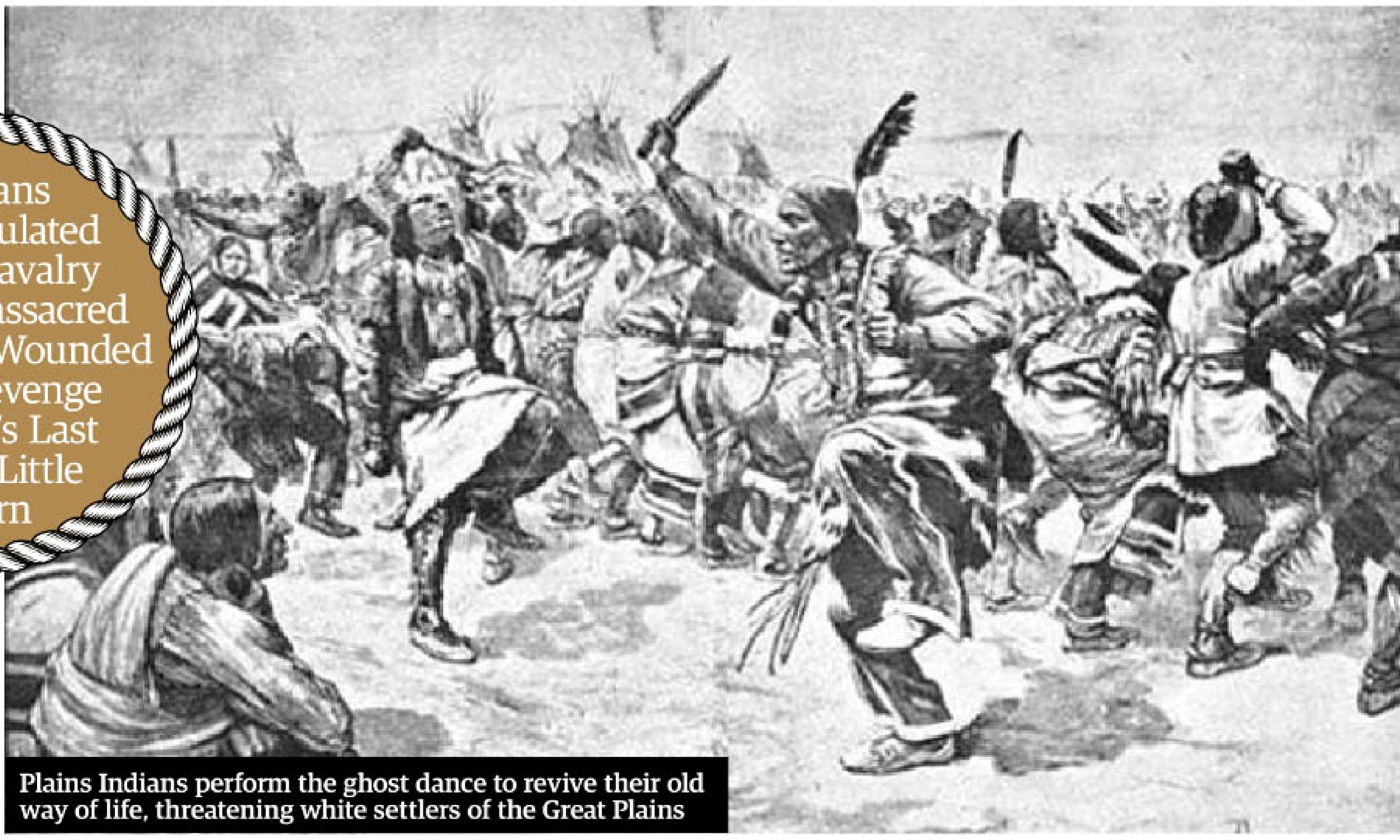
Colonel James Forsyth and Major Samuel Whitside of the 7th Cavalry were veterans of the American Civil War

When the shooting ended, at least 150 Sioux men, women, and children, including Spotted Elk, had been killed. Some estimates of Sioux dead run as high as 300. Fifty-one Native Americans were wounded, and at least seven of these later died. Twenty-five soldiers were killed, some probably by friendly fire.

After the encounter at Wounded Knee, first referred to as a battle and only later as a massacre, a great blizzard swept the plains. When three days of bad weather subsided, civilian burial parties gathered the bodies of the dead Sioux and interred them in a mass grave. The massacre effectively ended the ghost dance movement and is considered to mark the end of the bloody wars between the United States and the Native Americans of the Great Plains.

Historians have speculated that 7th Cavalry troopers massacred the Sioux at Wounded Knee in revenge for Custer's Last Stand at Little Bighorn

Today, Indian activists point to Wounded Knee as a prime example of the brutality with which the US government suppressed Native Americans. In 1973, members of the American Indian Movement chose Wounded Knee as the symbolic site for a 71-day occupation to call attention to their plight. A century after the massacre, the US Congress passed a resolution expressing "deep regret" for the terrible event.



Plains Indians perform the ghost dance to revive their old way of life, threatening white settlers of the Great Plains

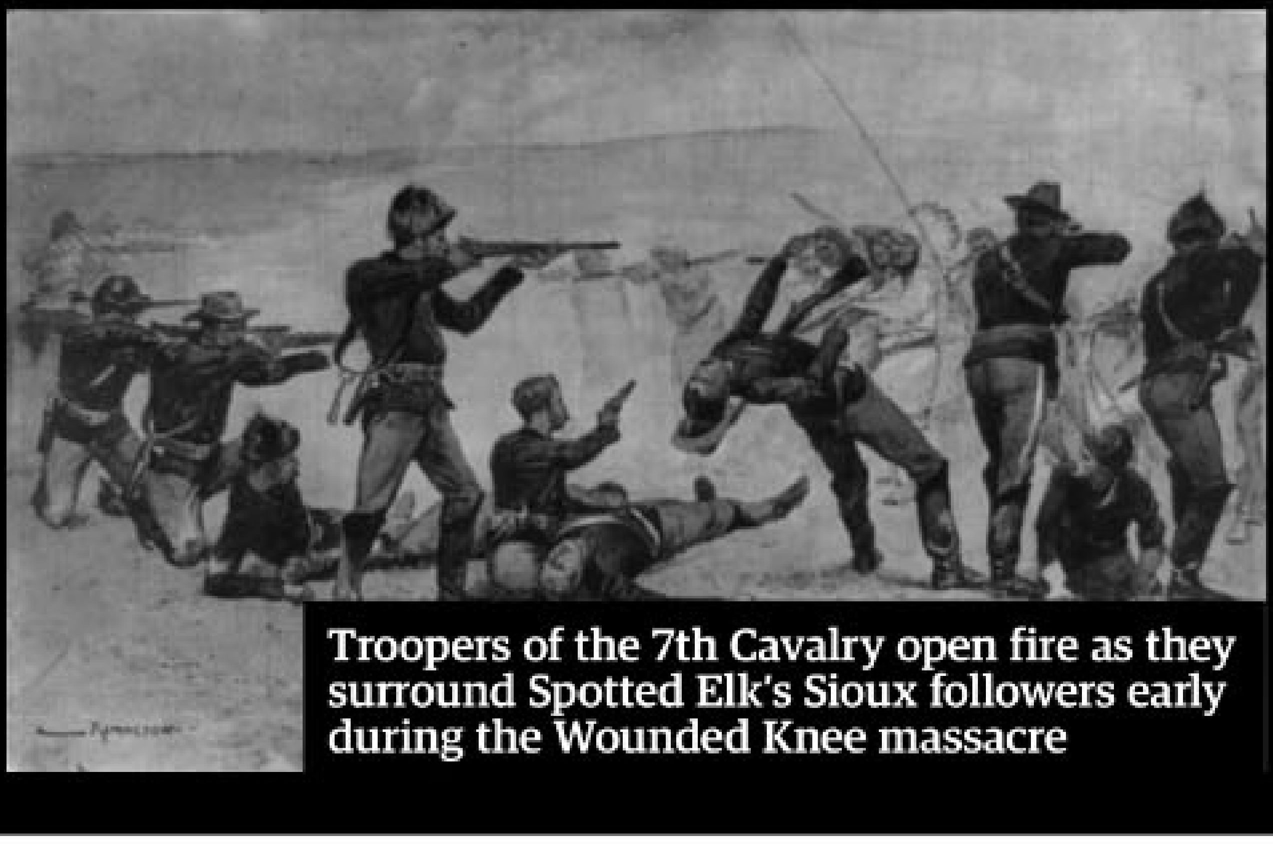
Colonel James Forsyth led the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee. He retired from the Army as a major general

✶ Medals for massacre? ✶

More than a century after the massacre at Wounded Knee, controversy continues to swirl around the horrific encounter. Among the points of perennial contention is the awarding of 20 Congressional Medals of Honor to US soldiers who participated in the massacre or the campaign that led to it.

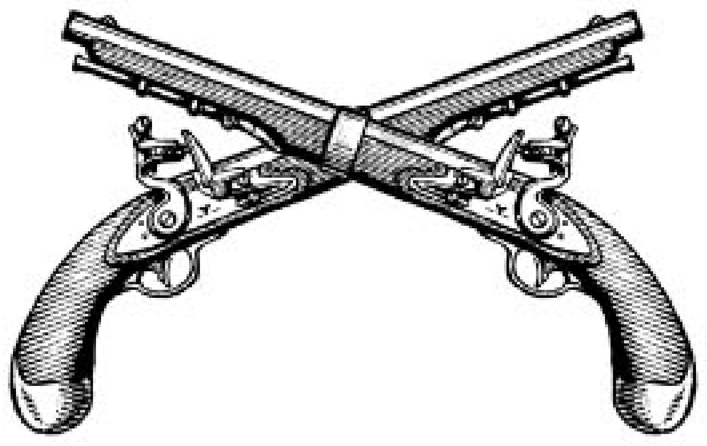
During the years that followed Wounded Knee, numerous soldiers received the medals for gallantry during the so-called 'battle.' However, time has yielded conclusions that dispute the nature of the event to such a degree that the term is hardly descriptive of the manner in which as many as 300 Sioux – more than 60 of them women and children – died. One of the original citations commends a soldier for "bravery displayed while shooting hostile Indians," despite the fact that his own commanding officer recalled that the trooper did actually "deliberately aim at and hit two Indians who had run into the ravine."

The number of Medals of Honor awarded for Wounded Knee invites scrutiny. Some researchers conclude that the criteria for the award at the time were somewhat different from those of later conflicts. Regardless, as recently as 2001, Native American organisations have criticised the awards and called upon the US government to rescind them.



Troopers of the 7th Cavalry open fire as they surround Spotted Elk's Sioux followers early during the Wounded Knee massacre

©Alamy.



BUTCH CASSIDY

His exploits with the Wild Bunch captured the imagination of the public and even his death became the stuff of legends. Is Butch Cassidy the most infamous figure of the Wild West?

Say the name Butch Cassidy and it's hard to not immediately think of the Sundance Kid and the 1969 film. Its story of two wise-cracking buddies is so ingrained in culture as to be taken as fact. But it isn't fact. For a start, Cassidy and Sundance were not best friends. They did flee to Argentina together, but that was more opportunity than choice. But even if the film didn't nail it in terms of accuracy, that is not to say that Butch Cassidy's life wasn't full of thrills, adventure and intrigue.

Born Robert Leroy Parker on 13 April, 1866, in Utah, Cassidy's parents were staunch Mormons. His dad, Maximillian Parker, was 12 when he arrived with his family in Salt Lake City in 1856, and they became Mormon pioneers.

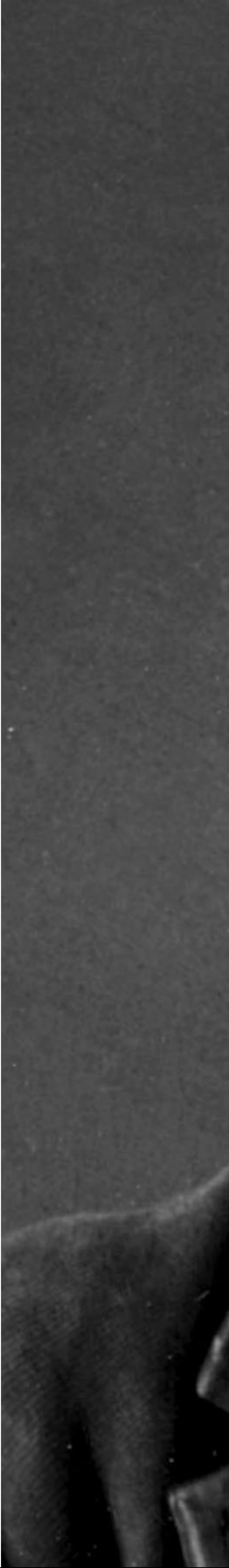
Cassidy's childhood was spent on his family's ranch, but perhaps sensing that the Mormon life was not for him, he left home during his early teens. He supported himself by working on various ranches, and it was while at a dairy farm that he started to get drawn into the criminal world.

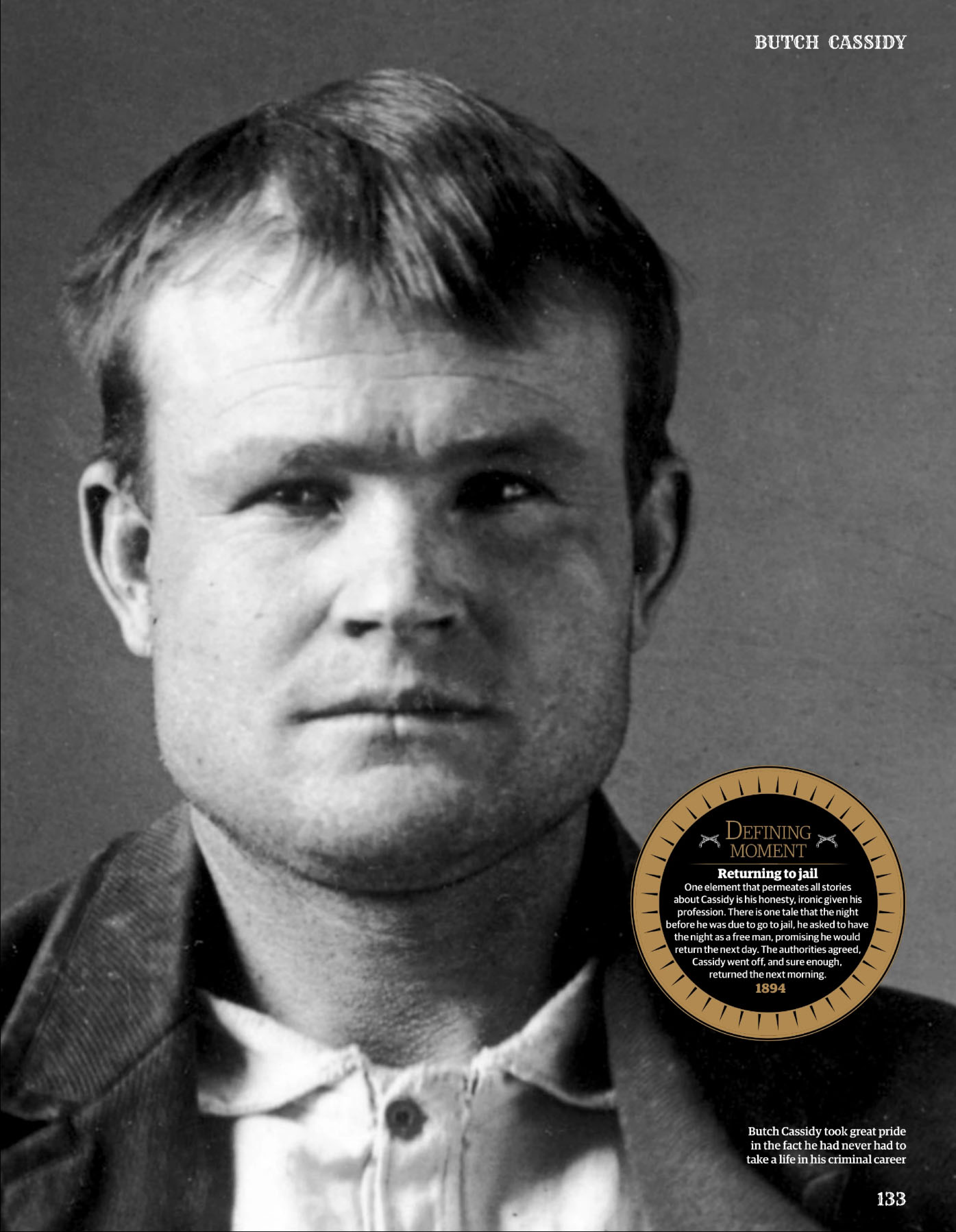
Mike Cassidy (real name John Tolliver McClammy) was a cowboy and rustler and soon-to-be mentor and friend of the young Parker. In fact, it's said that Robert dropped his Parker surname in favour of Cassidy in honour of his friend, adding it to his nickname of Butch. It is also said that the name change was due to a desire to not disrespect his family, as at the time he had a feeling his path would take a significant diversion from the Mormon lifestyle he had been brought up to believe in.

For a while Butch continued to move between ranches, living the life of a cowboy in Wyoming and Montana until he gravitated to Telluride, Colorado, in 1887. After striking up a friendship with race horse owner Matt Warner some time earlier, Cassidy robbed his first bank.

It was the 24 June, 1889, and Cassidy, Warner and the two McCarty brothers helped themselves to about $21,000 from the San Miguel Valley Bank. The crew didn't hang around for long, making their way to the Robbers Roost, an area of rough terrain in southeast Utah. The natural crags and canyons made this a popular hideout for outlaws, and in fact it was while Cassidy and his best friend Elzy Lay were lying low there that they formed the Wild Bunch.

When the heat had died down, Cassidy made his way to Wyoming, where he bought a ranch on the outskirts of Dubois. Although it's possible he did this in an attempt to earn an honest living, the fact he never actually made any money from it and that the location was just over from another outlaw hangout – the Hole in the Wall – suggests the ranch was a front for nefarious activities. There's also the fact he was arrested in 1894 for stealing horses and possibly running a protection racket among ranchers.





Butch Cassidy took great pride in the fact he had never had to take a life in his criminal career

DEFINING MOMENT

Returning to jail

One element that permeates all stories about Cassidy is his honesty, ironic given his profession. There is one tale that the night before he was due to go to jail, he asked to have the night as a free man, promising he would return the next day. The authorities agreed, Cassidy went off, and sure enough, returned the next morning.

1894

Casiddy served 18 months of a two-year sentence at the Wyoming State Prison, where upon his release in 1896 he was pardoned by Governor William Alford Richards. While some may have taken the pardon as an opportunity to turn their life around and walk the straight and narrow, it did absolutely nothing to quash Cassidy's criminal tendencies. After his release from jail, Cassidy went on to form the Wild Bunch and forever seal his place in the Wild West hall of fame.

Perhaps fittingly for a bunch of thieves, the gang's name was literally taken from the Doolin-Dalton Gang (also known as the Wild Bunch) and consisted of a rag-tag crew of criminals. In addition to Cassidy and his best friend, William Ellsworth 'Elzy' Lay, the core gang consisted of Harvey 'Kid Curry' Logan, Ben Kilpatrick, Harry Tracy, Will 'News' Carver, Laura Bullion and George 'Flat Nose' Curry.

Other members would come and go, including Harry Alonzo Longabaugh (The Sundance Kid), who Cassidy recruited not long after leaving jail. But it was this core group who went on to perform the longest stretch of successful train and bank robberies in American history.

They wasted no time. Cassidy, Lay, Logan and Bob Meeks targeted the bank in Montpelier, Idaho on 13 August, 1896, just a few months after his release from prison. This first robbery set off a chain of others, taking the gang across South Dakota, Wyoming, Nevada and New Mexico. Their hauls would range from just a few thousand to $70,000 from a train outside Folsom, New Mexico.

DEFINING MOMENT

Recruiting the Sundance Kid

Although they didn't have the full-on bromance portrayed in popular culture, by inviting the Sundance Kid to join the Wild Bunch, Cassidy unknowingly set in motion a relationship that would secure his place in Wild West history. It's impossible to think of Butch Cassidy without the Sundance Kid.

August 1896

Rather than encourage the ire of law-abiding citizens, the public were enamoured with their adventures, almost rooting for them to do well. Some of the reason for that could be because Cassidy had a bit of a Robin Hood persona, often sharing his loot with local people who were struggling to get by.

Although seen as the leader of the gang, Cassidy was always a little bit removed from his criminal colleagues. For a start, he took great pride in the fact he had never killed anyone in his criminal career. If being chased, his preferred defence was to shoot the horse carrying the person chasing him. However, this refusal to shed human blood did not extend to his criminal comrades, many of whom had no qualms about killing people – usually officers of the law – during close pursuits.

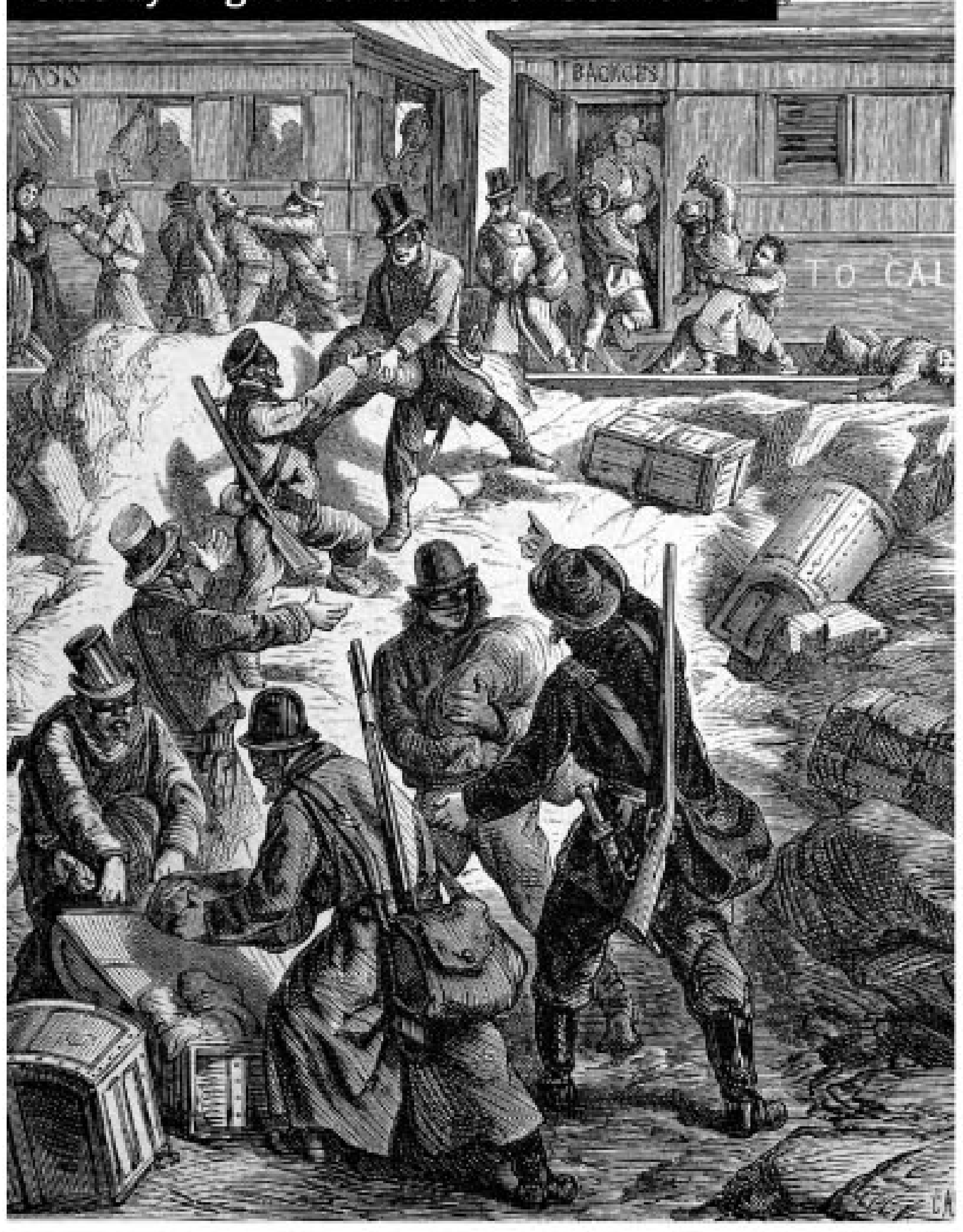
Wilcox, Wyoming, became the location of the most famous and most destructive Wild Bunch robbery. On 2 June, 1899, the gang robbed a Union Pacific Overland Flyer passenger train. There was a shootout with the law following the robbery, which saw Kid Curry and George Curry kill Sheriff Joe Hazen. The gang got away with $30,000.

For Cassidy, the robbery had serious ramifications. The train was carrying gold to pay troops in the Spanish-American War, and by robbing it he was deemed to have committed an act of terrorism. From that robbery onwards, Cassidy and the Wild Bunch were targeted as national terrorists, with a reward of $18,000 if caught, dead or alive. Even though it's doubtful Cassidy robbed the train – one of the terms of his 1896 pardon was to not commit a crime in Wyoming, and Cassidy was a man of his word – it put the gang firmly in the sights of local law enforcement and the infamous Pinkerton Detective Agency. Yet still they robbed.

In fact, just a few weeks later on 11 July, the Bunch robbed a Colorado and Southern Railroad train near Folsom, New Mexico. Another shootout with law enforcement ensued, and this time Cassidy's best friend, Elzy Lay, killed sheriffs Edward Far and Henry Love. Lay was eventually caught and convicted for his crimes, sentenced to life imprisonment for the double murders.

Things then went from bad to worse. During 1900 and 1901, various members of the Wild Bunch were either shot or captured. It was too much for Cassidy. He had gone from being seen as a cowboy Robin Hood to feeling suffocated by the law, so he fled to New York City with Sundance and his girlfriend, Etta Place, and then on to Buenos Aires, Argentina, in February 1901. They bought a ranch and settled down for a few years. But the peace was not to last.

The Pinkerton Detective Agency had been hired by Union Pacific after the Wilcox robbery to hunt down Cassidy, and it was very good at its job. Agent Frank Dimaio had learnt of Cassidy's location, and everything was in place to make an arrest. However, a local sheriff who had become friends with Cassidy tipped the trio off, so in May 1905 they made their escape north, ending up in Chile. Then for some


The Wicox train robbery is the most infamous crime of the Wild Bunch, but Cassidy might not have even been there

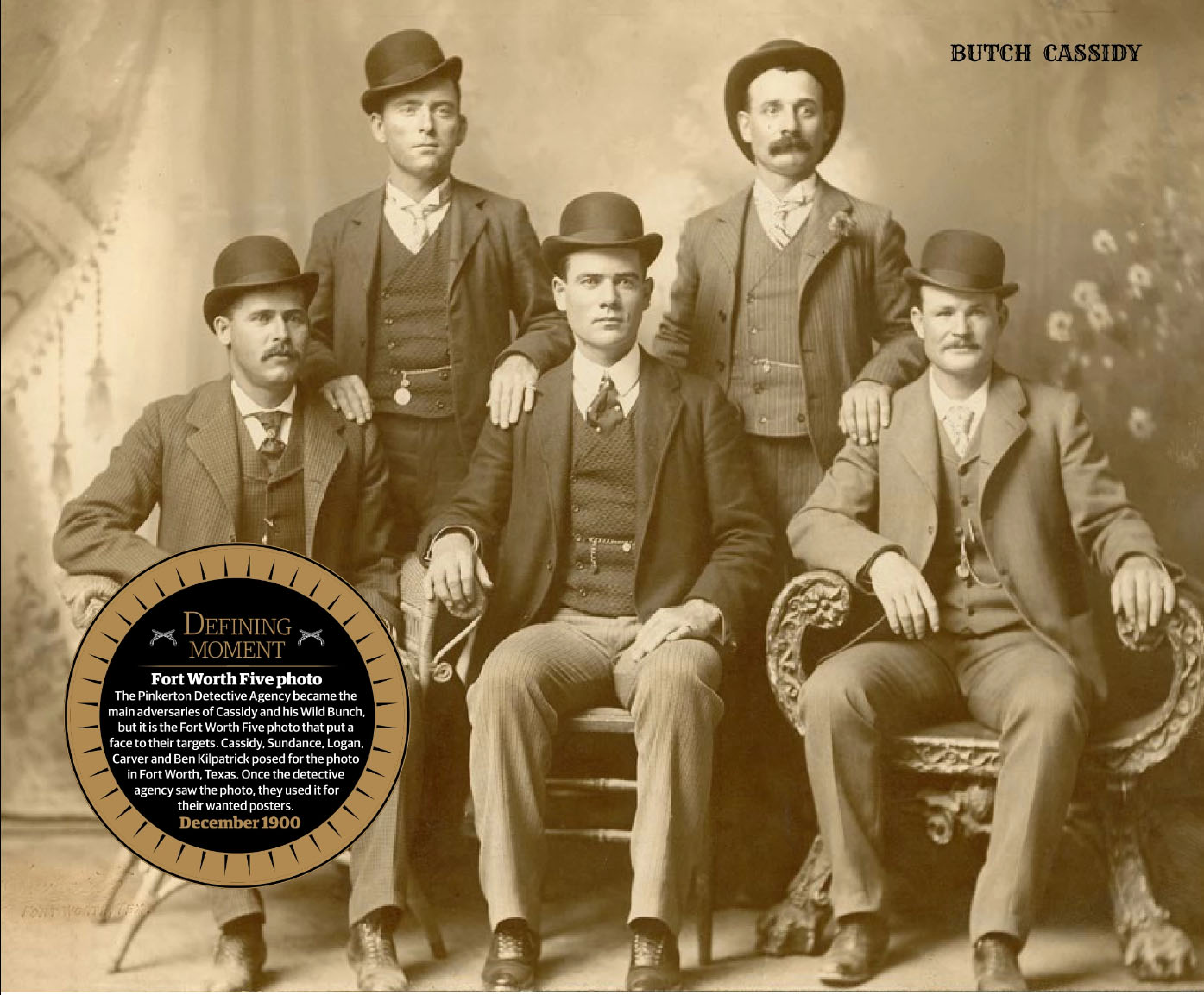
✶ When did Cassidy actually die? ✶

One of the most memorable scenes from the *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* film is the great shootout at the end, with both going down in a blaze of glory. But there have been many theories that Cassidy did not die in Bolivia, that he instead returned to America to live out the rest of his days in peace.

One of the most interesting theories came from a 1978 TV series called *In Search Of…*. It focused on an argument made by Wild West historian Charles Kelly in his 1938 book *The Outlaw Trail: A History of Butch Cassidy And His Wild Bunch*. In it Kelly states that if Cassidy was alive he would have visited his father, and because he didn't do so he must have been dead.

In the episode, residents of Baggs, Wyoming, all state that Cassidy visited during 1924. There was also an interview with Cassidy's sister, Lula Parker Betenson, who says that not only did he visit his father, but he went on to live out his life in Washington. Betenson's 1975 book, *Butch Cassidy, My Brother*, also states that Cassidy told her he had got a friend to say one of the bodies in Bolivia was his so he could live a life free of pursuit. And before you dismiss the theory as fanciful, remember that there is no actual evidence either way!

A still from *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid*. Did the infamous shootout actually happen?



DEFINING MOMENT

Fort Worth Five photo

The Pinkerton Detective Agency became the main adversaries of Cassidy and his Wild Bunch, but it is the Fort Worth Five photo that put a face to their targets. Cassidy, Sundance, Logan, Carver and Ben Kilpatrick posed for the photo in Fort Worth, Texas. Once the detective agency saw the photo, they used it for their wanted posters.

December 1900

reason they returned to Argentina, and not only did they return, they robbed a bank. Now being pursued for certain, they returned to Chile once again.

But it was too much for Etta Place. Sundance took her back to San Francisco while Cassidy took an alias of James 'Santiago' Maxwell and worked at the Concordia Tin Mine. Sundance eventually joined him there. In 1907, the pair moved to Santa Cruz, apparently to lead the life of ranchers. But somehow it all went wrong.

On 3 November, 1908, in Bolivia, a courier for the Aramavo Franke and Cia Silver Mine was transporting his company's payroll, worth around 15,000 Bolivian pesos. Two masked Americans attacked and robbed him, before lodging in a small boarding house in a nearby town. But the owner was suspicious of the lodgers.

After alerting a nearby telegraph officer, on the night of 6 November, soldiers, the police chief, the local mayor and his officials all surrounded the boarding house, waiting to arrest the robbers.

Things didn't quite go to plan. The robbers started to shoot, killing one soldier and wounding another. The gunfire was returned and before long an all-out gunfight had erupted. Then there was a scream, a shot and then another shot. Silence followed.

The authorities entered the boarding house the next morning and found two dead bodies. One had a bullet would in the forehead, while the other had one in the temple, in addition to various bullet wounds in the arms and legs. The police report assumed that one robber had shot his partner to spare him further agony before then killing himself.

The report also concluded that the two bodies were the men who had robbed the courier, but there were no other forms of identification, although it was assumed that the bodies belonged to Cassidy and Sundance. They were buried in a small cemetery in unmarked graves. It was an inauspicious end to an action-packed era of looting and shooting, and perhaps not one that suited the legend of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

However, death was by no means the end for this notorious duo. While the eponymous 1969 film is the most widely recognised tribute to them, its sequel, *Butch And Sundance: The Early Days*, released in 1979, is just one more example of many media portrayals of their famous escapades.

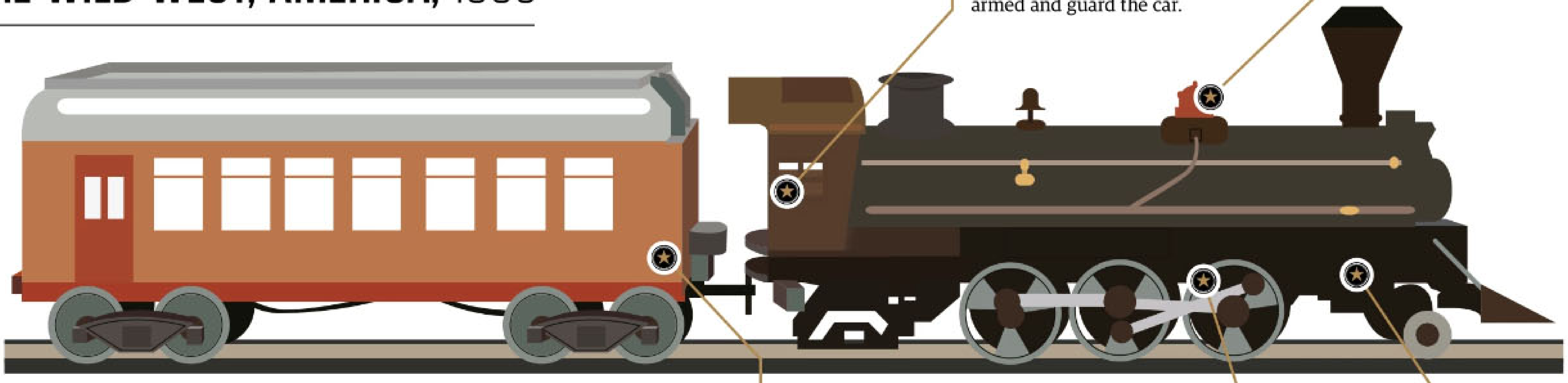
The Sundance Kid and girlfriend Etta Place, taken while in New York before heading to Argentina

©20th Century Fox, Alamy, Thinkstock

How to ROB A TRAIN

THE WILD WEST, AMERICA, 1880

THE TRAIN



Train crew
The train crew would typically consist of a driver, a fireman and an expressman. The expressman would be armed and guard the car.

Train
While there were many types of train during this period, larger engines tended to be the ones that were robbed the most because of the valuables they were carrying.

Speed
As trains could reach a top speed far superior to horses most robberies took place while the train was not in motion.

Express car
The express car was where the train's valuables were held, including weapons and precious items locked away in on-board safes.

Transport
In the Wild West of the 1880s the railway network across America was being established, connecting major towns and cities.

The history of the Wild West was punctuated by the tales of lawless desperados breaking into banks and holding up runaway trains. This lawlessness was a product of the perceived freedom from central authority in the western settlements of America and the vulnerable position of trains as they travelled through open plains. Trains were a popular target because of the valuable goods they carried, often from the rich East-coast cities to the Wild West. Saddle up your horse and go make your fortune.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

COLT REVOLVER

USA, 1872

Popular among outlaws because of its reliability and stopping power, the Colt .45 was simple to operate and easy to maintain.

MUSTANG HORSE

USA, 1700'S

Strong, hardy and fast, the breed of horse popularly known as the 'mustang' was used by lawman and outlaw alike.

DYNAMITE

ENGLAND, 1867

This was revolutionary in the Wild West as a portable form of explosive, which could quickly put a big hole in a solid object – like a safe.

DISGUISES

WORLDWIDE, 19TH CENTURY

Train robbers and thieves in general protected their identity from law enforcement throughout the period. Neckerchiefs to cover the face were very popular.

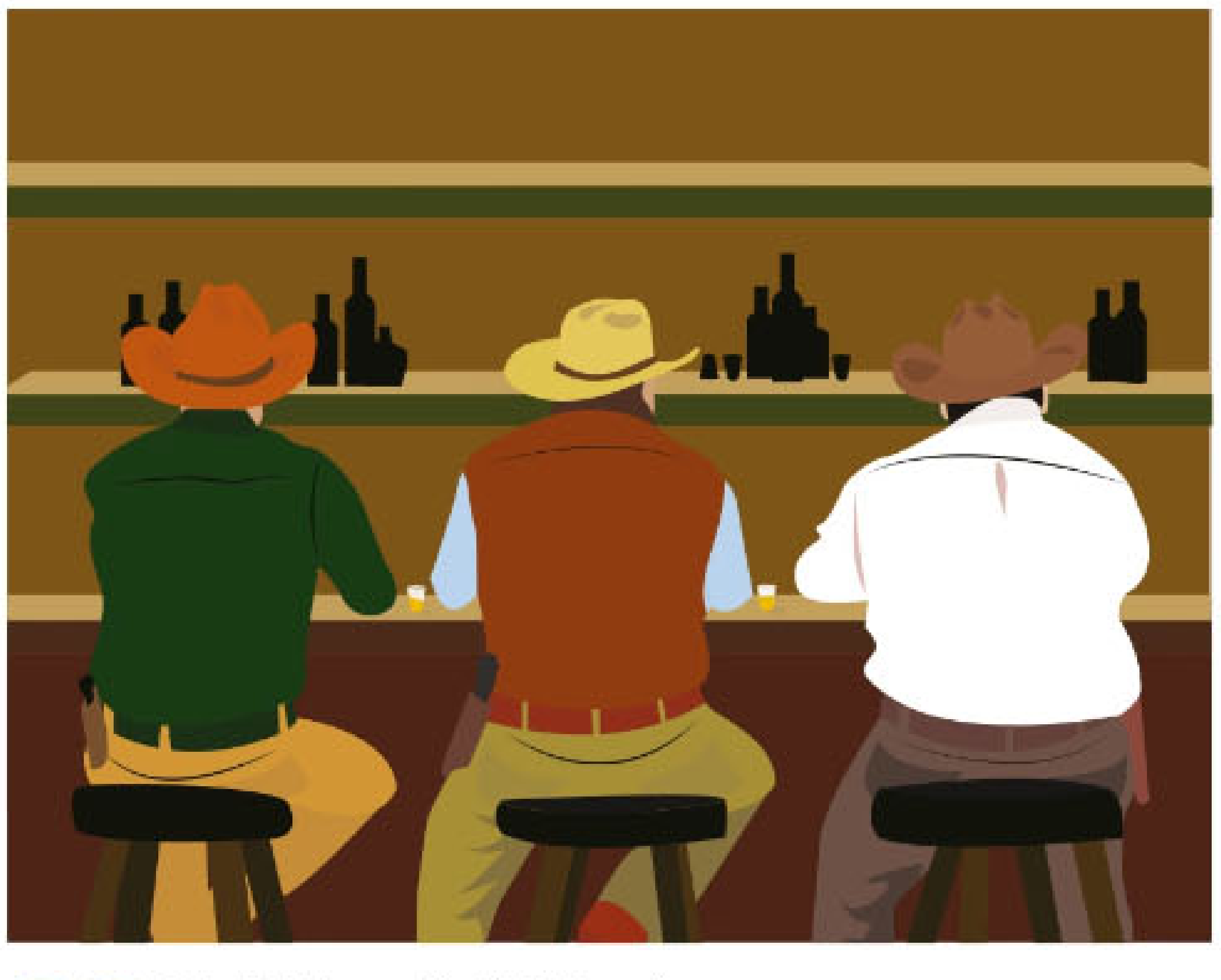
BOWIE KNIFE

USA, 1830

The bowie knife was popular among outlaws during this period as a valuable tool and a weapon. It could be used for picking locks and cutting through packages.

01 Assemble a posse

A train robber is only as good as the people around him acting as his posse. The robber needs people he can trust, who don't have too may moral scrupples and won't get greedy or sell their fellow desperados out to the authorities. Butch Cassidy tended to work with his own gang of loyal friends – you'll need people like that.



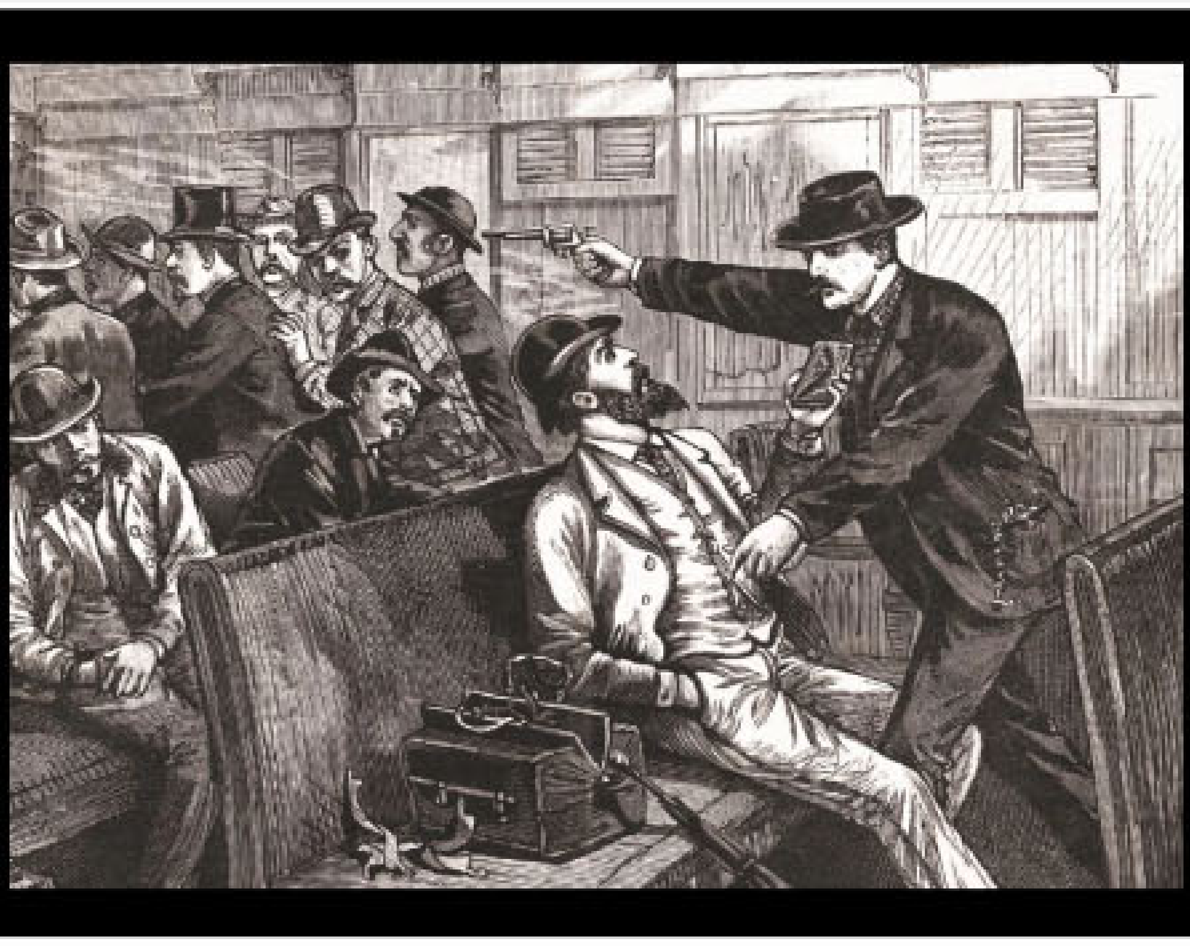
02 Get the right train

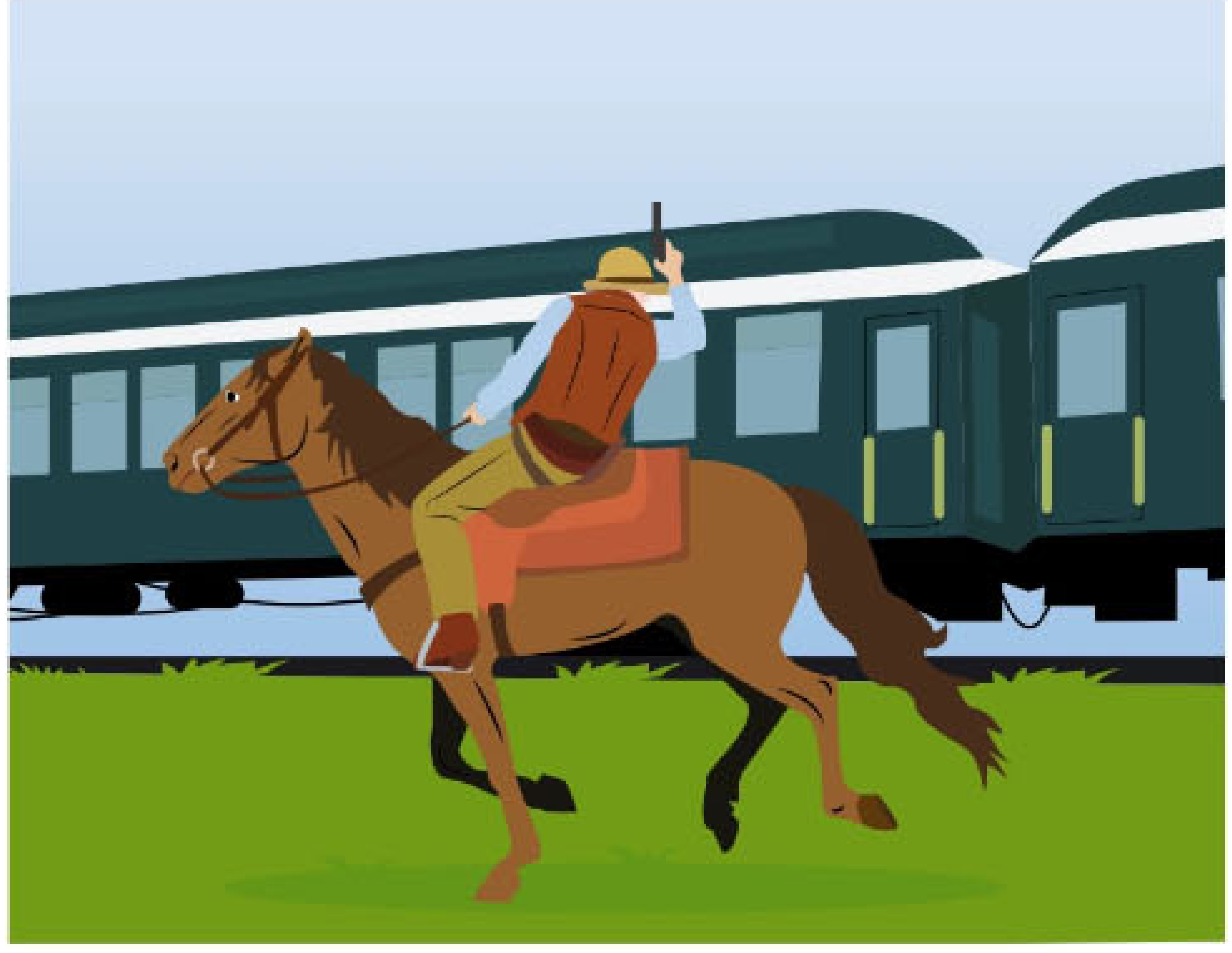
The best trains to hold up are the payroll carriages running federal money to soldiers and federal employees to the settlements of the Wild West. Find out when the next payroll train departs by checking schedules and listening in on conversations at local saloons, then plan how you are going to intercept its route.

✶ How not to rob a train ✶

The Baxter's curve train robbery in Sanderson, Texas in 1912 went down in history as one of the worst ever attempts to rob a train. Ben Kilpatrick, originally a member of Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch, and Ole Hobek boarded the Southern Pacific train in Dryden, Texas and held up its crew.

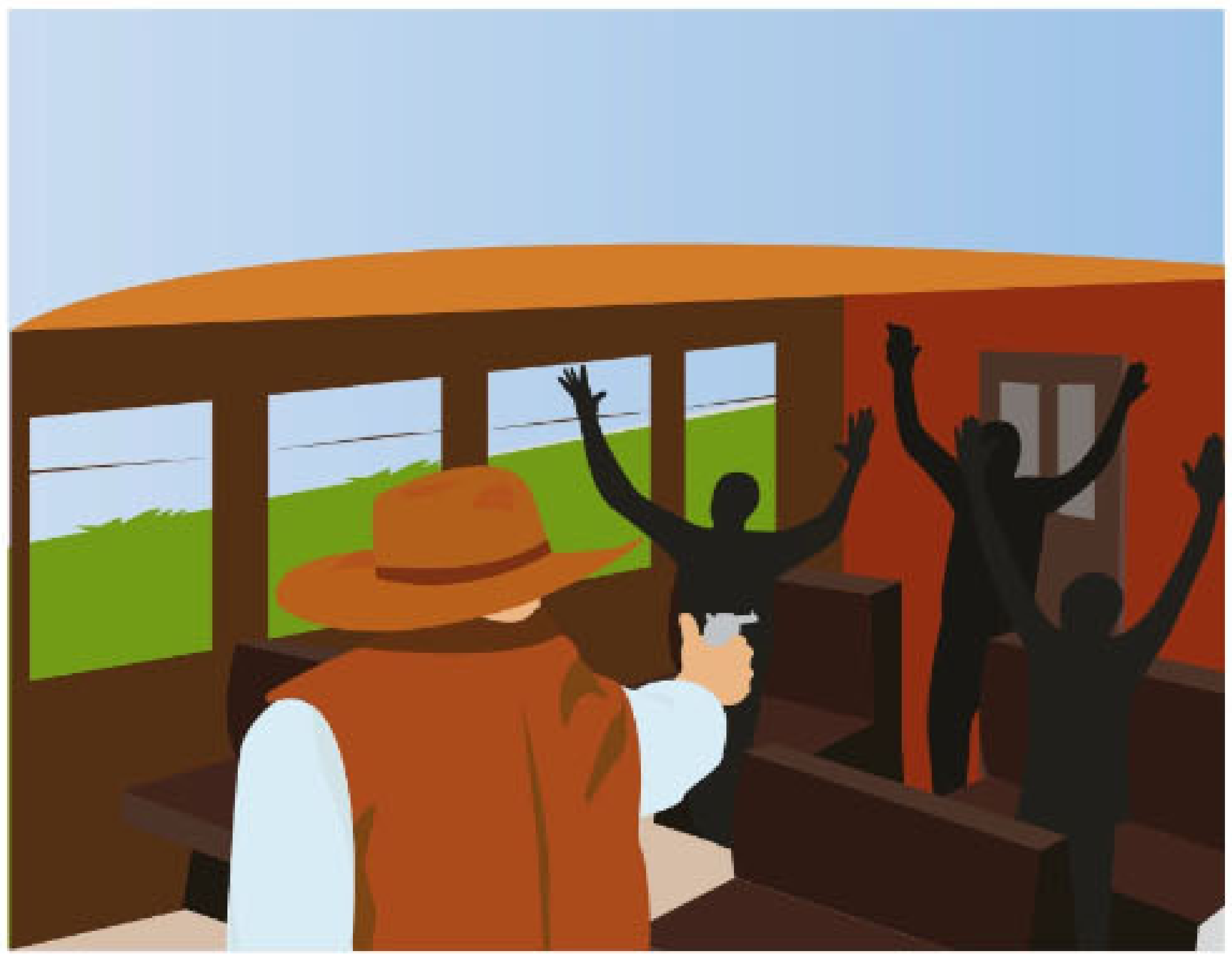
Hobek then led one of the crewmembers, David A. Trousdale, to the express car in order to de-couple its valuable contents from the rest of the train. Hobek wasn't keeping an eye on Trousdale, though, which allowed him to conceal an ice mallet in his jacket. As Hobek bent down to pick up the packages in the express carriage, Trousdale jumped him and beat him to death. Trousdale then armed himself with Hobek's gun and waited for Kilpatrick to come down to the express car to find out what was going on. Kilpatrick eventually came to the entrance to the carriage and when he put his head through the door, Trousdale shot him in the face.





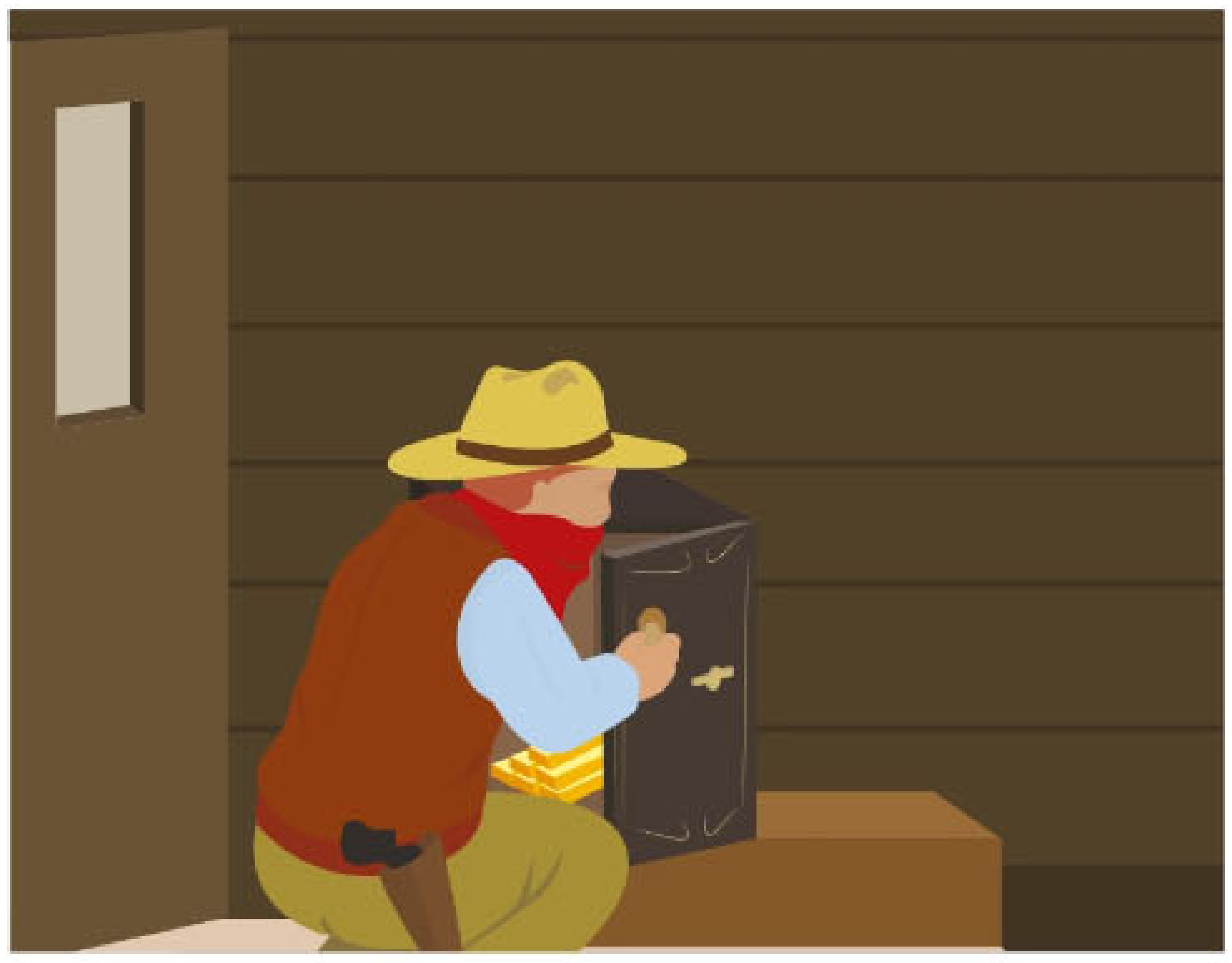
03
Board the train

Most train robberies do not take place while the train is in motion. The vast majority of robbers stop the train first and then board it. However, if time is of the essence, get some fast horses, find a part of track where the train will have to slow down, run the horses close to the express car and board with guns drawn.



04
Take 'em alive

It's not advantageous to any train robber to kill anyone. Dead train drivers can't drive the train and dead passengers can't reveal where the expensive valuables are kept. Keep your guns drawn and use them to intimidate the passengers and train crew but at the same time keep a cool head and your bullets in your chamber.



05
Crack the safe

The safe is generally in the express car, with a federal agent in charge of protecting it. While the agent is almost always armed, if you take the train by surprise he won't have time to defend himself. Disarm him and, with a gun levelled at his head, tell him to open the safe. If he refuses you might have to crack it yourself.

06
Escape

The best train robbery is a quick train robbery; contrary to popular belief, the Wild West is not lawless. Local law enforcement is around and it's armed to the teeth. Gather up the loot, get the driver to stop the train and ride your horses hard to a safe house. It's probably best to keep hidden for the next few days at least.

INFAMOUS ROBBERS

JESSE JAMES

ADAIR, IOWA , 1847-1882

Jesse James was arguably the most famous train robber. On one robbery, him and his gang wore Klu Klux Klan disguises and stole $51,000 in Adair, Iowa.

BUTCH CASSIDY

NEW MEXICO, 1866-1908

As part of his gang known as the Wild Bunch, Cassidy robbed a train in New Mexico, resulting in a famous shoot-out with the law.

WILLIAM L CARLISLE

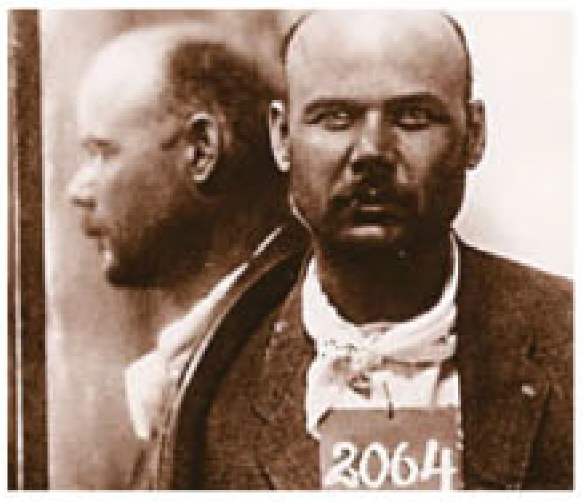
WYOMING, 1890-1964

Known as Robin Hood of the Rails, Carlisle was one of the last train robbers of the Wild West. He would reimburse guards for lost tips during his robberies.

BURT ALVORD

COCHISE, ARIZONA, 1866-1910

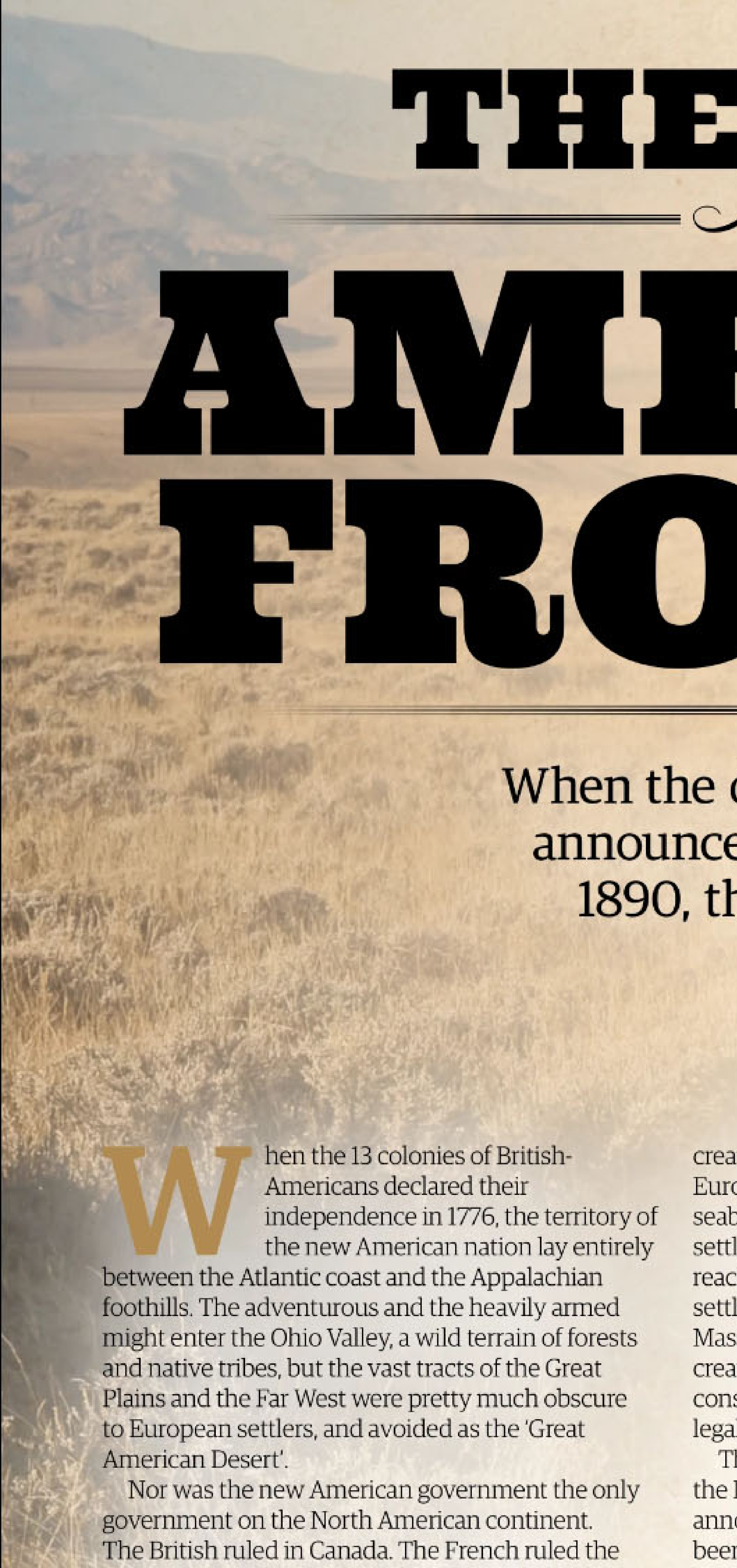
Originally a lawman, he left that life behind to rob trains in 1899, making him a wanted man throughout the region.



© Corbis

Between 1865 and 1890, more than half a million black 'freedmen' and their families moved to the frontier territories

A prairie schooner on the Blue Mountain Crossing of the Oregon Trail, now part of a National Park



THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

When the director of the US Census Bureau announced the 'closing of the frontier' in 1890, the Wild West lost its wildness

When the 13 colonies of British-Americans declared their independence in 1776, the territory of the new American nation lay entirely between the Atlantic coast and the Appalachian foothills. The adventurous and the heavily armed might enter the Ohio Valley, a wild terrain of forests and native tribes, but the vast tracts of the Great Plains and the Far West were pretty much obscure to European settlers, and avoided as the 'Great American Desert'.

Nor was the new American government the only government on the North American continent. The British ruled in Canada. The French ruled the southern territories around the Mississippi Delta. The Spanish ruled in Florida and, through their empire in Mexico, in the future states of California and Texas.

The 'pioneer spirit' is a legend, grounded in two distinct facts. The United States of America were created by the settlement of immigrants from Europe and emigrants from the cities of the eastern seaboard. Their 'frontier' was the furthest limit of settlement, the last farm in a chain of settlement reaching hundreds of kilometres back to the first settlements of Jamestown, Virginia and Plymouth, Massachusetts. The United States were also created as a political ideal, sprung from a written constitution. For the government, the 'frontier' was a legal and political boundary.

These two 'frontiers' did not align until 1890. In the December of that year, the US Census Bureau announced that the frontier line, which had been inching west ever since the first European settlement, had disappeared. The frontier had dissolved into the Pacific Ocean, or met up with the extant borders of California, Oregon and Washington. The Census Bureau also noted that no further tracts of land remained beyond the authority of the government in Washington, DC, and that the population density of the United States now stood at two people per square mile.

The frontier was closed. This was a watershed in American history, and in Americans' understanding of themselves. The previous three centuries had seen the gradual expansion of European settlement from the Atlantic coast, over the Appalachian Hills, into the Old Northwest and the Mississippi Valley, and on to the Plains, the Old Southwest and the Far West. Americans had built their ideal selves in the image of these facts. The values of the pioneer were individualism, toughness and self-sufficiency, a rough democracy that defined itself by opposition to European manners.

The United States changed dramatically in the half-century between the War of 1812 and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. As the populations of the East states rose through immigration from Europe, waves of emigrants set off west in search of arable land. The government in Washington, DC laid the ground for settlement in advance, by negotiating the expansion of the frontier for cash.

In the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the US government paid $15 million for more than 800,000 square miles of French-held territory; at present value, a bargain at around a $250 billion. In 1818, Britain and the US agreed to a 'joint occupation' of the Oregon territory, in the Pacific Northwest. In the Transcontinental Treaty of 1819, the Spanish ceded Florida and their claim to Texas. In the 1820s, Russia acknowledged that its claim to Alaska stopped at Alaska's current southern boundary.

The economic depression of 1837 sent a sudden wave of emigrants west with 'Oregon Fever'. The 3,218-kilometre Overland Trail began at Independence, Missouri, crossed the Great Plains to the Continental Divide, and entered the Far West via the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. From there, the wagon trains of 'prairie schooners' headed north to Oregon or south to California. Some 300,000 people made the six-month journey in the decades before the Civil War. Most were young families, but young men, hoping to find a fortune in the gold fields, were disproportionately represented.

By the 1840s, there were ten American settlers in the Oregon Territory for every British settler, and the government in Washington, DC was asking the British to renegotiate the 'joint occupation'. Meanwhile, the populism and agricultural economy that had underpinned 'Jacksonian democracy', named after President Andrew Jackson, became an industrial economy riven by debates over slavery and the emancipation of women. This optimistic 'Age of Reform' ensured that America's democratic experiment had not only survived, but was prospering. America's resources, including the vast expanses of land in the West and the constant flow of immigrants from Europe, would continue to allow its further development from a peripheral state into a world power.

Between 1866 and 1888, cowboys herded more than 40 million longhorn cattle from the ranges to the railheads

The 'Expansionists' realised that the settlement of the West was absolutely essential for the fulfilment of this vision. They also viewed it as the continuation of America's original vision, which was the expansion across the continent of self-government and democratic institutions. This universal vision would frequently draw upon convictions of religious and racial superiority. The language of Expansionism identified America's destiny with the Protestantism and Anglo-Saxon origins of the early settlers. In the settling of the West, God's will was made manifest.

In 1845, John L O'Sullivan, the editor of the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, pinpointed this particular brew of ambition, hope and bigotry. It was, O'Sullivan wrote, "the fulfilment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions".

Manifest Destiny was not a prescription for government policy, so much as a description of what was already taking place. By the early 1840s, the final lineaments of the American frontier territories were key electoral issues, capable of making a president or breaking a party. In 1840, when President John Tyler announced his support for annexing the self-declared Republic of Texas, where thousands of Americans had now settled, Tyler's Whig party supporters deserted him.

The presidential election of 1844 turned on the annexation of Texas, and the status of the Oregon Territory. The Democratic Party's nomination contest between former president Martin Van Buren, who opposed annexing Texas, and Tennessee senator James Polk, who advocated for pushing America's borders southwest towards the Rio Grande, ended in a victory for Polk and Manifest Destiny.

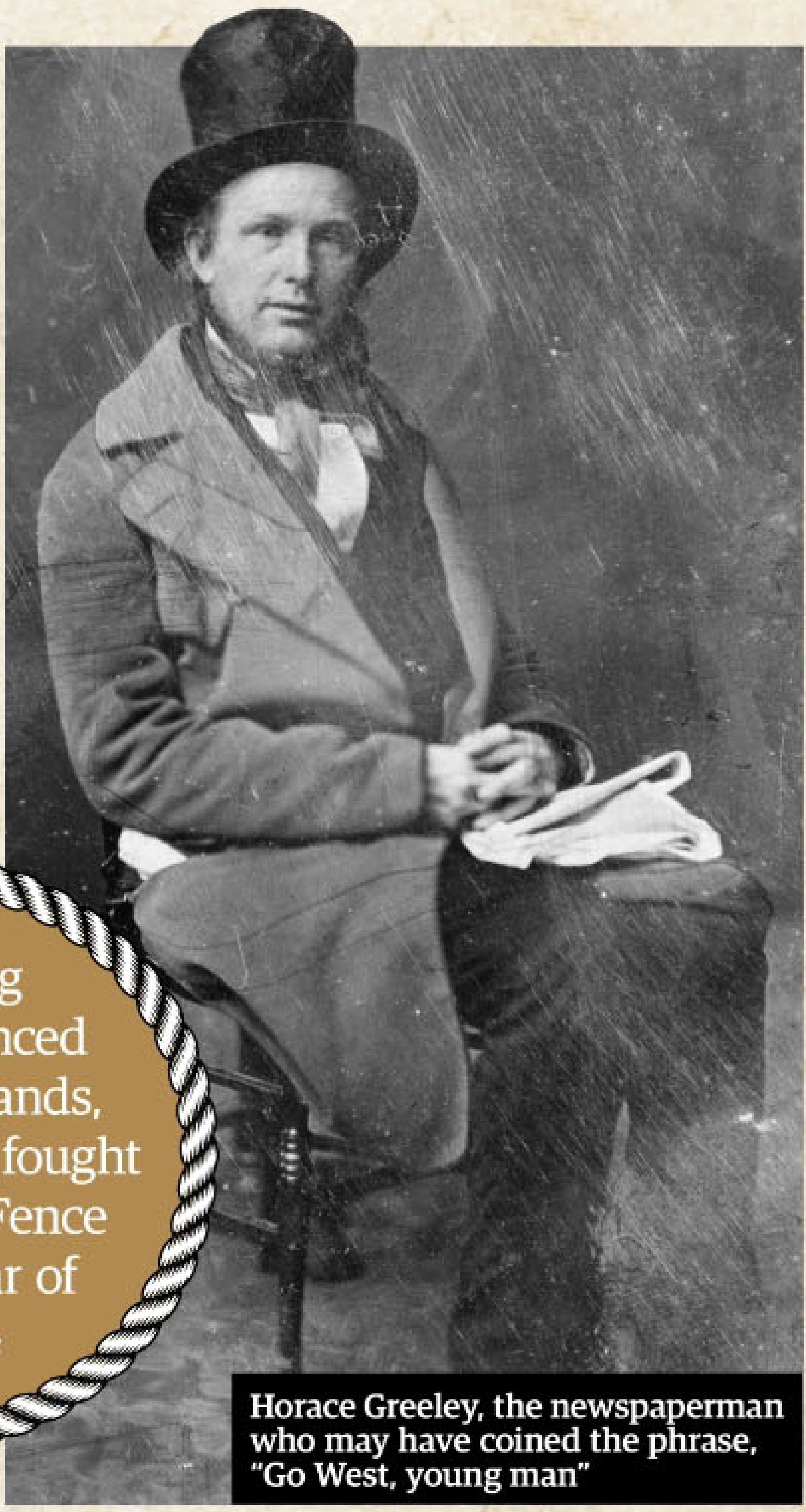
In December 1844, one of outgoing President Tyler's last acts in office was to engineer a pro-annexation resolution from both houses of Congress. In March 1845, one of incoming President Polk's first acts in office was to order American troops southwest to the Nueces River. In May 1846, Polk declared war on Mexico.

The Whigs divided yet again over 'Mr Polk's War'. Abolitionists in the Northeast were appalled that Polk was willing to incorporate the slave-holders of Texas into the Union without requiring them to free their slaves. Since the Missouri Compromise of 1820, abolitionist states and slaveholding states had agreed to disagree, but Polk now proposed to tip the balance in favour of the slaveholders, as the price of pushing the frontier west.

In Concord, Massachusetts, Henry David Thoreau, the author of *Civil Disobedience*, refused to pay his poll tax, and deliberately sought to spend a night in the town jail; a model of non-violent resistance that would inspire subsequent pacifists like Tolstoy, Gandhi and Martin Luther King. The general public, however, approved of Mr Polk's War.

Last of the cowboys: Austin, Texas, 1915

When big ranchers fenced off grazing lands, small farmers fought back in the Fence Cutters' War of 1883-84



Horace Greeley, the newspaperman who may have coined the phrase, "Go West, young man"

"The United States will conquer Mexico," Thoreau's mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson warned, "but it will be as the man swallows the arsenic, which brings him down in turn." The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, imposed upon a defeated Mexico in February 1848, was a victory for Manifest Destiny, but one with extensive consequences.

The Whigs never recovered from their split over Texas, and rapidly dissolved into the Republican and Democratic parties. The entry into the Union of the slaveholders of Texas pushed the country further towards civil war. And with settlers already rushing west to the California Gold Rush, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo opened the ultimate prize - California - to the United States' government.

The population boom that followed the Gold Rush led to California joined the Union in 1850. The discovery of gold at Pike's Peak, Colorado in 1858 drew another 100,000 would-be miners to Colorado. Though few made their fortune and many died in the attempt, the miners were to accelerate Colorado's entry into the Union in 1876. Miners also flocked to extract silver from the 'blue earth' of Nevada, which entered the Union in 1864.

The Civil War shaped the future of American politics. The future of the American frontier was shaped in the midst of the Civil War, when Abraham Lincoln's administration passed the Homestead

Utah became a state in 1896, after the Mormons had agreed to abandon polygamy

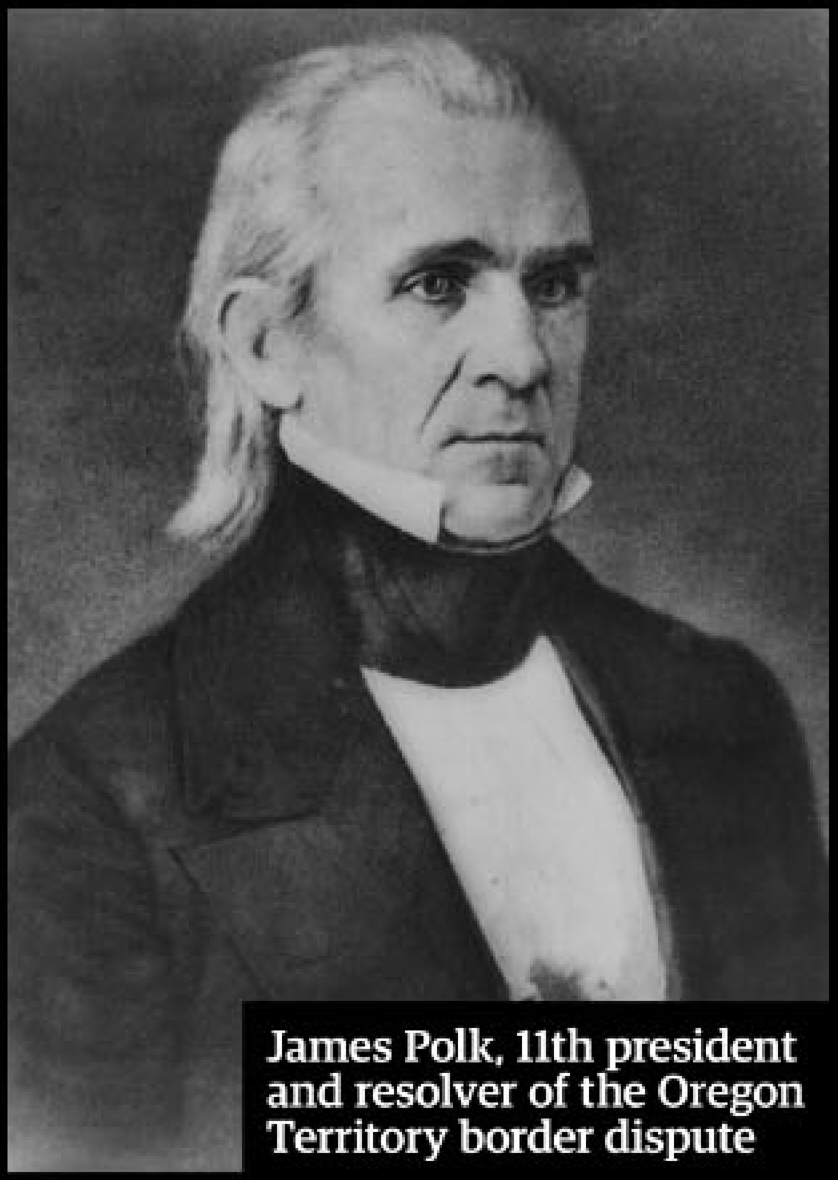
✶ 54 degrees, 40 minutes, or fight! ✶

The Americans and the British fought two wars, the War of Independence (1776-1783) and the War of 1812. In the 1840s, they nearly came to blows for a third time over the Oregon Territory.

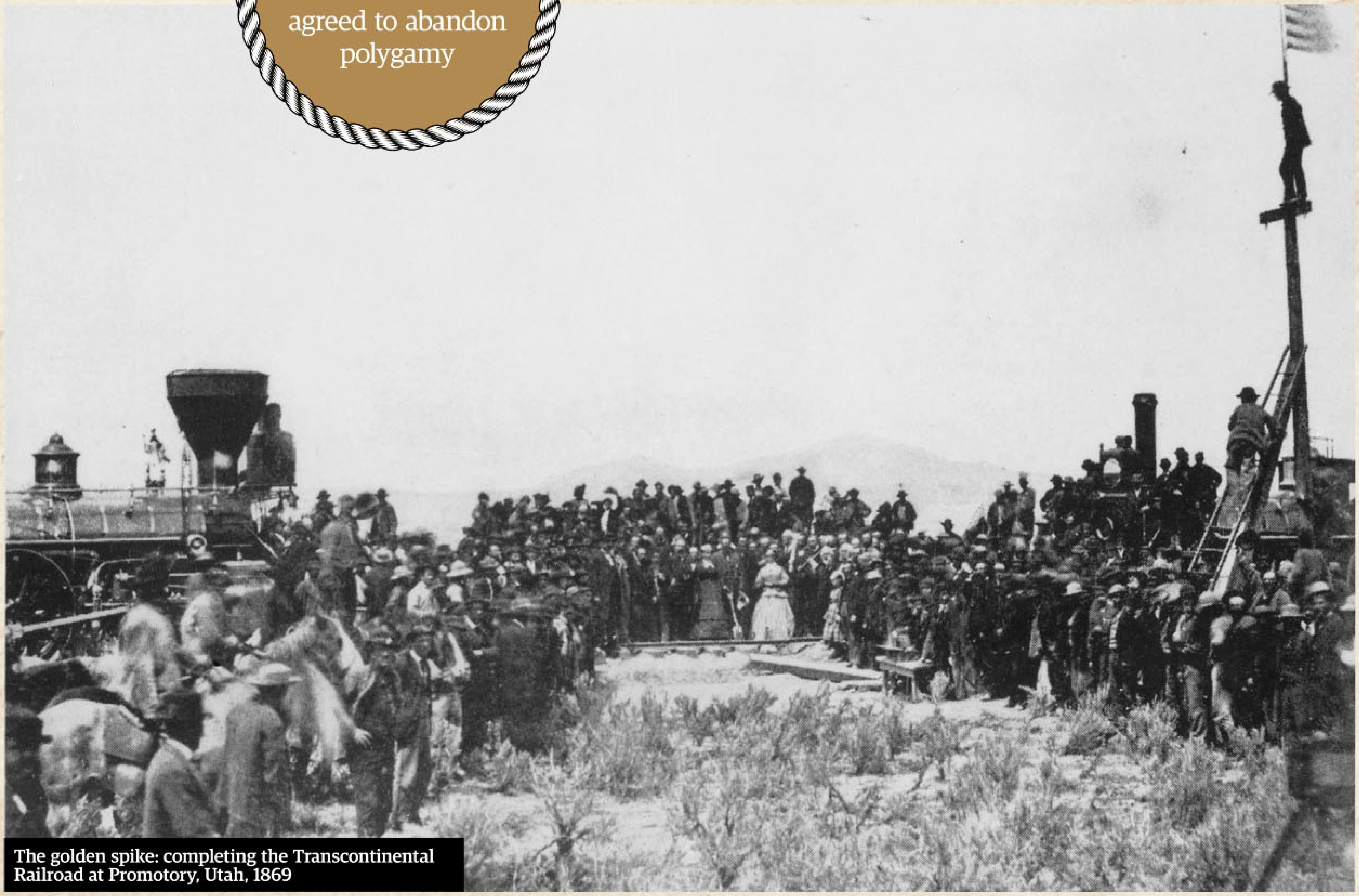
Under the 'joint occupation' agreement of 1818, the border between British-ruled Canada and the United States was fixed at the 49th Parallel from the Lake of the Woods in the Minnesota Territory to the Rocky Mountains. The British had wanted the rest of the border to follow the Columbia River west to the Pacific, but the Americans had wanted the border to follow the 49th Parallel. Unable to agree, the negotiators had agreed to wait ten years. In 1827, they agreed to disagree again, permanently postpone the issue.

In the early 1840s, American immigration into the Oregon Territory caused a crisis. In Congress, there were calls for war, and pushing the border north: "54 degrees, 40 minutes, or fight!' In 1846, President Polk proposed the 49th Parallel as the border, and the British accepted, with minor modifications, including the passing of Vancouver Island to Canada.

A subsequent dispute over the Juan de Fuca Strait, where the Salish Sea reaches the Pacific Ocean, was resolved by international arbitration. The current Canadian-American frontier runs down the middle of the 152-kilometre long strait. The Canadians dislike the results of the arbitration, but are wary of reopening another border dispute, far to the east in the Gulf of Maine.



James Polk, 11th president and resolver of the Oregon Territory border dispute



The golden spike: completing the Transcontinental Railroad at Promotory, Utah, 1869

✶ The American Dream – or Dreams? ✶

The world knows the American Dream when it sees it, but in truth there have been several American Dreams. The phrase derives from the 1950s, and the affluence of the postwar Eisenhower era. The content, however, might describe any era of American history, from the first settlement to the present day.

The first Europeans in America dreamed of wealth, the profits of trading in silver, gold and furs. So did the indentured labourers who contracted themselves to commercial ventures for ten or 20 years. The Puritans who arrived on the Mayflower in 1620, however, dreamed of religious freedom, and the opportunity to build an ideal community. These are the two contrasting ideals at the heart of the American Dream.

The American Constitution manages to neatly combine both ideals, by promising 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. The precursor to this phrase comes from the English philosopher John Locke, who thought that the government should ensure the 'life, liberty and property' of its subjects, but not much more. The belief that owning property might make you happier remains strong in Anglo-Saxon and Protestant countries. Almost all Americans own their own homes, and home ownership is much more common in Britain and Scandinavia than in southern Europe.

Dream imagery recurs in modern American politics, too. "I have a dream," Martin Luther King said, as he campaigned for racial equality. When Ronald Reagan campaigned for the presidency in 1980 on a promise of economic revival, he revived a Puritan image of America as "a shining city on a hill". More recently, when President Obama tried to legalise the status of the children of undocumented immigrants, he called his proposal the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act: the DREAM Act.

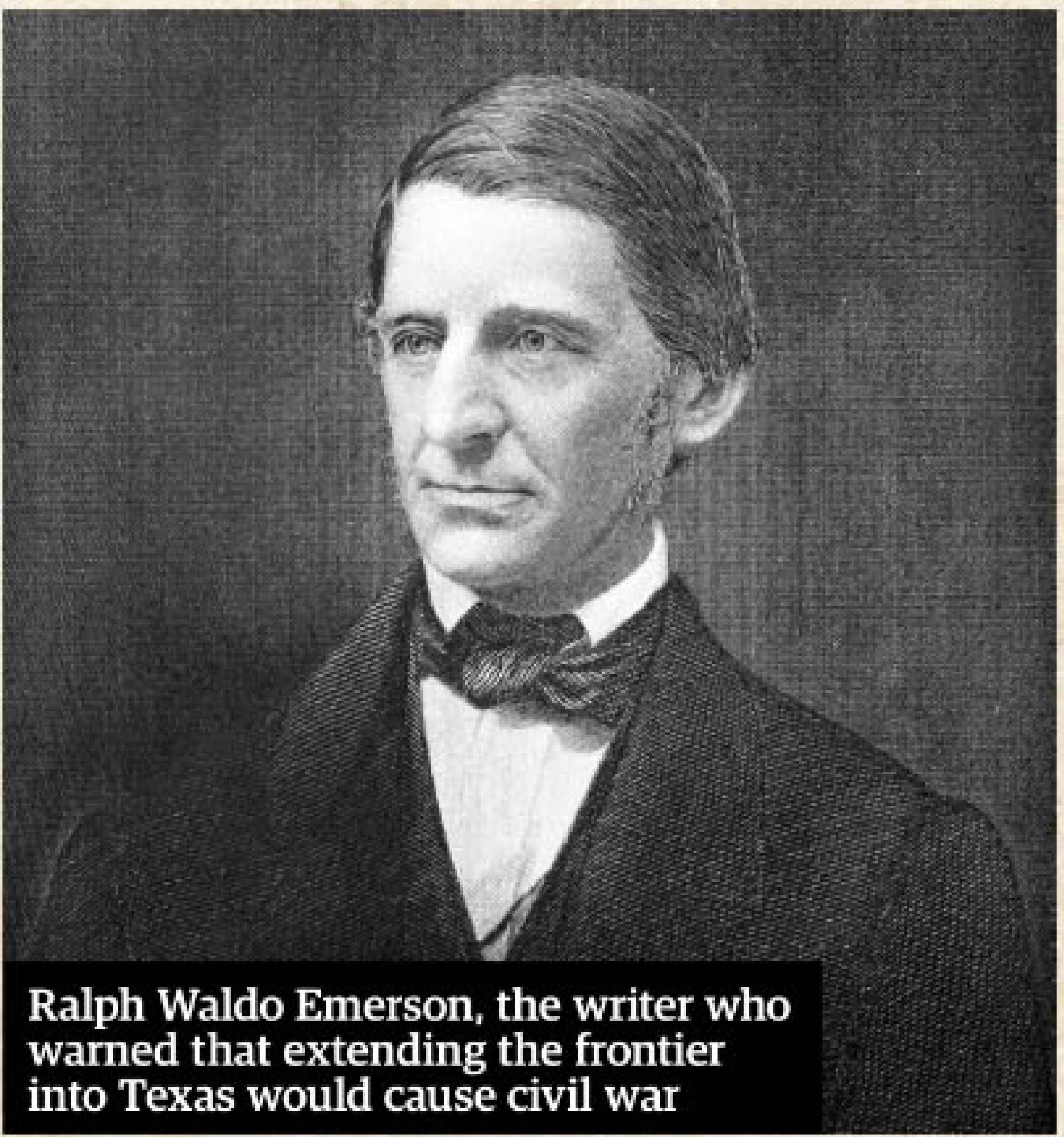
A 1956 Cadillac Coupe de Ville symbolises the American Dream – and American restlessness

Act of 1862. This guaranteed up to 160 acres of land in the Great Plains to any farmer who staked a claim. After six months on the land, the farmer would have the right to buy his land from the government at $1.25 per acre. If the farmer lived on it for five years, he received the title for free.

The Homestead Act sparked a wave of westward emigration from Easterners seeking to escape the Civil War. The end of the Civil War saw a further wave, this time of 'freedmen'; Southern blacks who had been freed from slavery.

When the war ended, Horace Greeley, editor of the *New-York Tribune*, issued orders to the next waves of emigrants: "Go West, young man."

The frontier territory, already contracting through settlement and the creation of new states, was further condensed by a second initiative of 1862. At the time, the railroad network ran from the Eastern cities to the eastern bank of the Missouri River. From there, settlers crossed the Great American Desert, the Great Plains, by wagon. Lincoln's government recognised that none of America's railroad companies could afford to lay a railroad across the Great American Desert, so it hired two companies to complete the Transcontinental Railroad.



Ralph Waldo Emerson, the writer who warned that extending the frontier into Texas would cause civil war

The Union Pacific company was engaged to lay 1,747 kilometres of track west from the Missouri River, across the Great Plains, and over the Rockies. The Central Pacific company was engaged to lay 1,108 kilometres of track running east from Sacramento in California, up to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. On 10 May 1869, Leland Stanford, governor of California, conducted the 'wedding of the rails' at Promontory, Utah, and completed the railway by nailing a golden spike.

Soon, further railroads crisscrossed the country. The railroads shaped the final development of the frontier. Farms and towns grew up along the lines. The mining industry grew, as the trains ferried ore back to the East for processing. The government's reach extended, because communications had accelerated – the telegraph cable soon snaked along the railroad lines – and because troops could be moved quickly across the country.

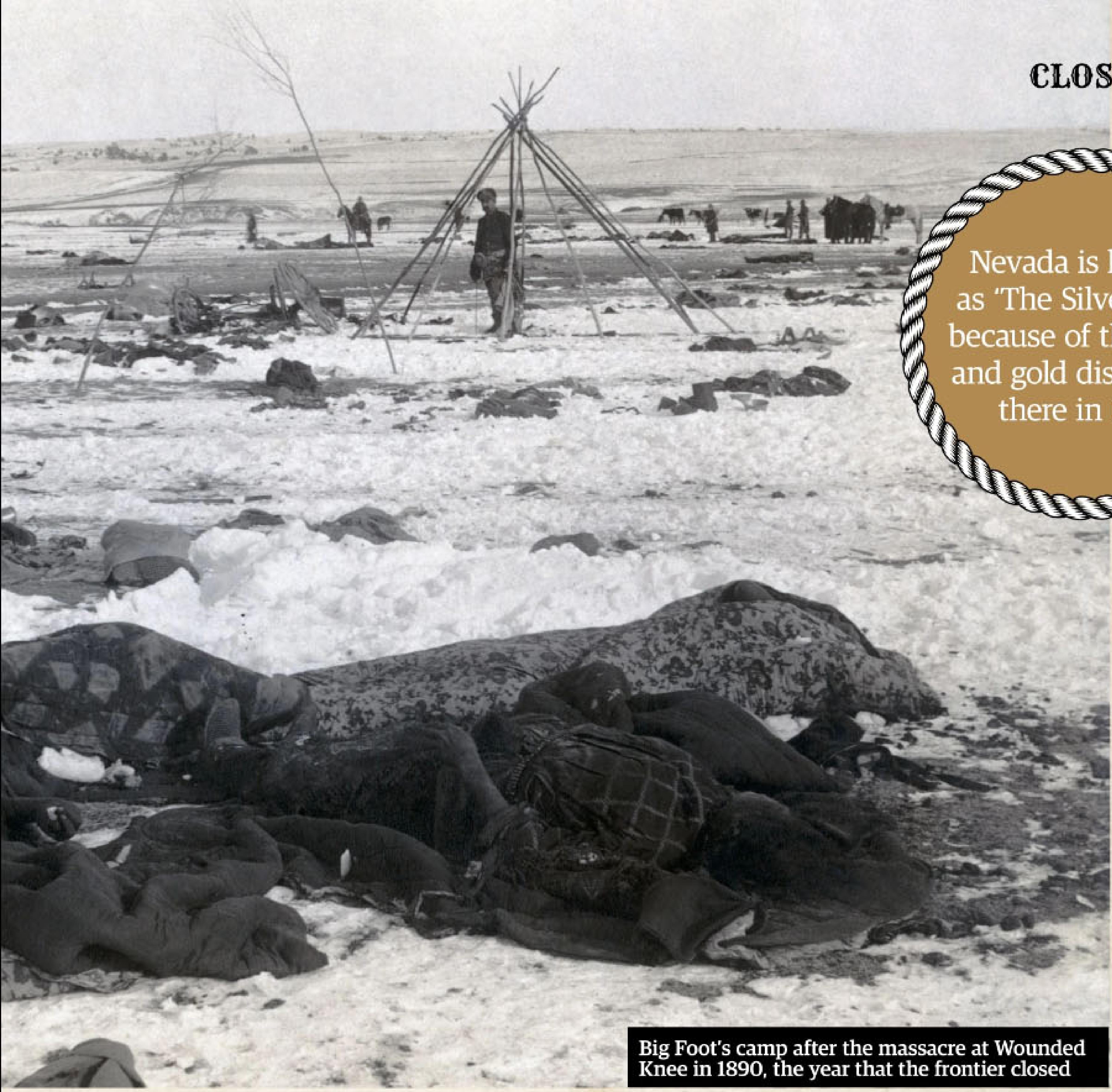
The railroad companies had extracted favourable terms from a government caught in a civil war. For each mile of track it laid on level ground, each company received $16,000 and a further 6,400 acres of federal land. In the following decades, the 'robber barons' of the railroads profited further by selling their land to settlers, or fencing off huge areas for sheep and cattle ranching. The 'open range' was closing. In 1873, Joseph Glidden invented a cheap way of fencing off the huge ranches that grew up after the railroad – barbed wire.

The railroad companies tripled their profits to $48,000 per mile in mountainous areas

The railroad made and unmade the cowboy. Cattle had to be herded from their ranges in Texas and the Plains to the giant stockyards which sprung up at the new railheads. From there, the cattle were shipped east in railroad cars. After the Civil War, some 40,000 ex-soldiers found new work as cowboys, driving herds of as many as 10,000 cattle to the stockyards. The Chisholm Trail ran 805 kilometres, from central Texas to Abilene, Kansas. The Western Trail to Dodge City was shorter, but the Goodnight-Loving Trail, from Central Texas to New Mexico to Cheyenne, Wyoming, was a whopping 1,126 kilometres.

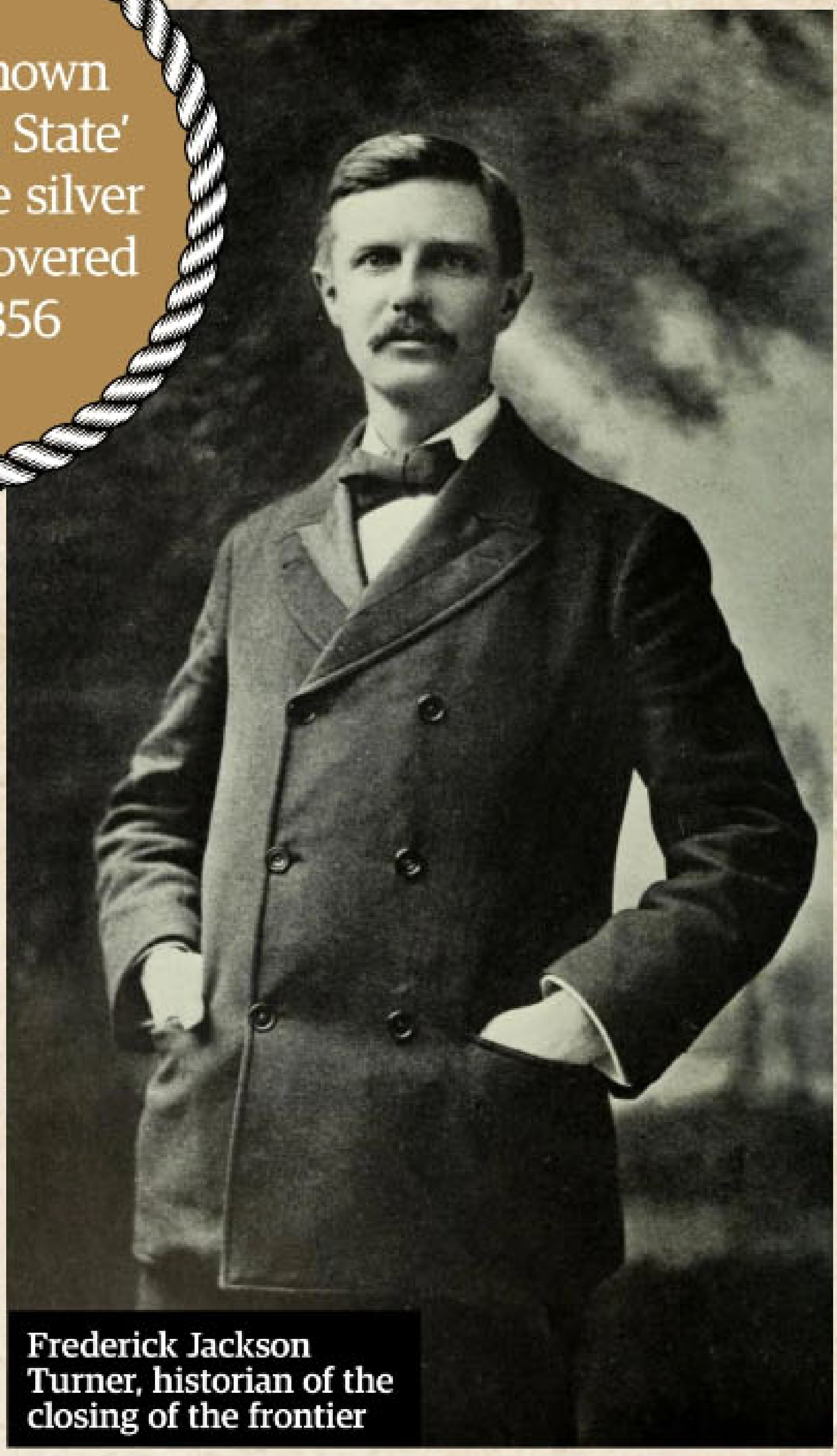
As the railroad network grew, the trails got shorter. After the invention of the refrigerated railroad car in the 1870s, cattle were slaughtered at the closest railhead, or at Kansas City and Chicago. The cowboy, that hero of the frontier, was heading for the sunset. So was another fixture of frontier mythology; the Pony Express courier. And while the railroad gave a last burst of glory to the cowboys, it was simply fatal for the Natives.

The Native Americans had already been pushed west with each stage of white emigration. The US



Big Foot's camp after the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, the year that the frontier closed

Nevada is known as 'The Silver State' because of the silver and gold discovered there in 1856



Frederick Jackson Turner, historian of the closing of the frontier

government, always susceptible to pressure from public opinion back east, and often so weak in the frontier territories that it was not able to fulfil its good intentions, was complicit with the violent extirpation of the Native Americans from their ancestral lands. The survivors were corralled into reservations. These were reserved because white settlers could not find a use for the land. In cases where the settlers did find a use - a gold rush in South Dakota, for instance - the Natives were forced to move again.

The Oklahoma Land Rush of 1899 was the last wave of emigration before the frontier officially closed. At noon on 22 April 1889, more than 50,000 men, women and children stampeded on wagons and horseback into 2 million acres of erstwhile Indian Territory in central Oklahoma. In the same year, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana and Washington entered the Union. Idaho and Wyoming followed in 1890.

Union Pacific labourers were mostly Irish immigrants and ex-soldiers. Central Pacific labourers were mostly Chinese immigrants

When Frederick Jackson Turner, a young historian at the University of Wisconsin, heard that the Census Bureau now considered the frontier closed, he realised that a chapter of American history had closed too. In 1893, Jackson Turner read a paper to the American Historical Association, entitled *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*.

The idea of the frontier, as a lived fact and a legal fact, had shaped not just America's internal and external borders. It had shaped the experiences of those Americans who had 'gone West' to seek their fortune or to seek a living diet from the soil. It had also shaped the experiences of those who had remained 'back East', for distance did not weaken their zeal for expansion. The frontier, Turner believed, had been the zone in which the ideal of the American character had been shaped and tested.

Frontier life encouraged democracy, practicality, and what Emerson called 'self-reliance'. For the same reasons, the frontier also encouraged contempt for high culture, and an over-reliance on violence. American democracy, Turner argued, was 'born of no theorist's dream'. It came 'out of the American forest'.

American democracy retained the ideal of the frontier, even as the United States became the world power of the 20th century. The internal empire of the Plains, the Southwest and the Far West had been conquered. New frontiers would be found outside America's borders in the imperial conquest of Cuba in 1898, and in President Kennedy's exhortation that the United States beat the Soviet Union in the 'space race' of the 1960s. As the voiceover of a popular television series said, space could be America's final frontier, an end to the restless expansion that had defined its history.

Interior of a shack built in Kansas after the Homestead Act of 1862

©Bureau of Land Management , Library of Congress; Prints & Photographs Division, NARA, Wiki; Ralf Roletschek

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE UP TO 74%

Every issue of your subscription, delivered direct to your door. Print & digital editions available.

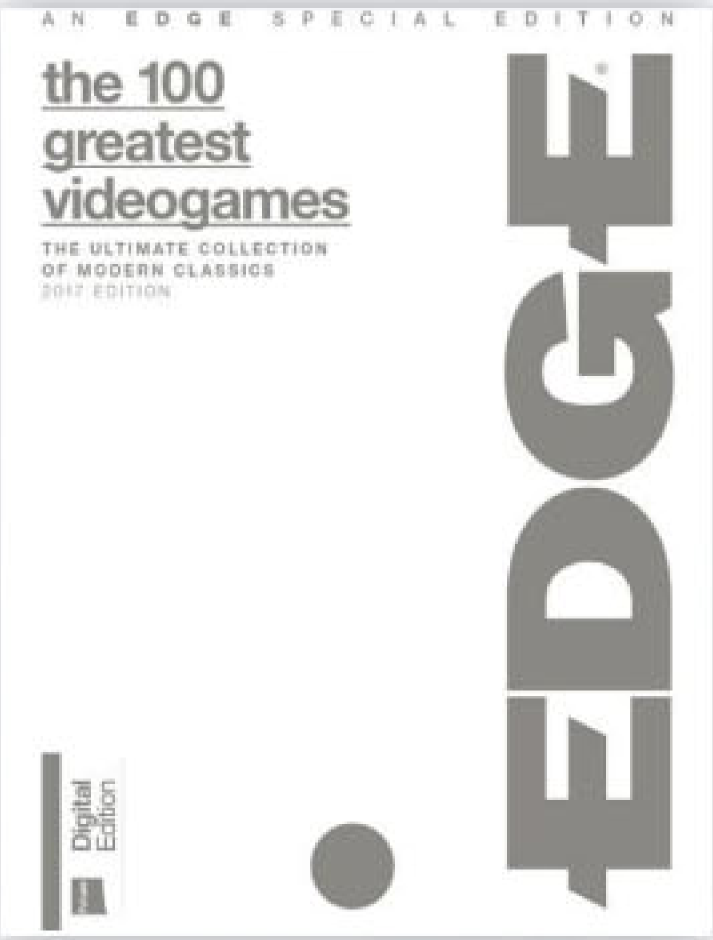
CLASSIC ROCK
Digital Photographer
retro GAMER
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CLASSIC GAMES
EDGE
THE FUTURE OF INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
THE MAGAZINE FOR DRUMMERS
RHYTHM
KINGS OF POP
LINUX FORMAT
VIRTUALISE LINUX NOW!
REVIEWED: AMD RYZEN 5 1400 CPU

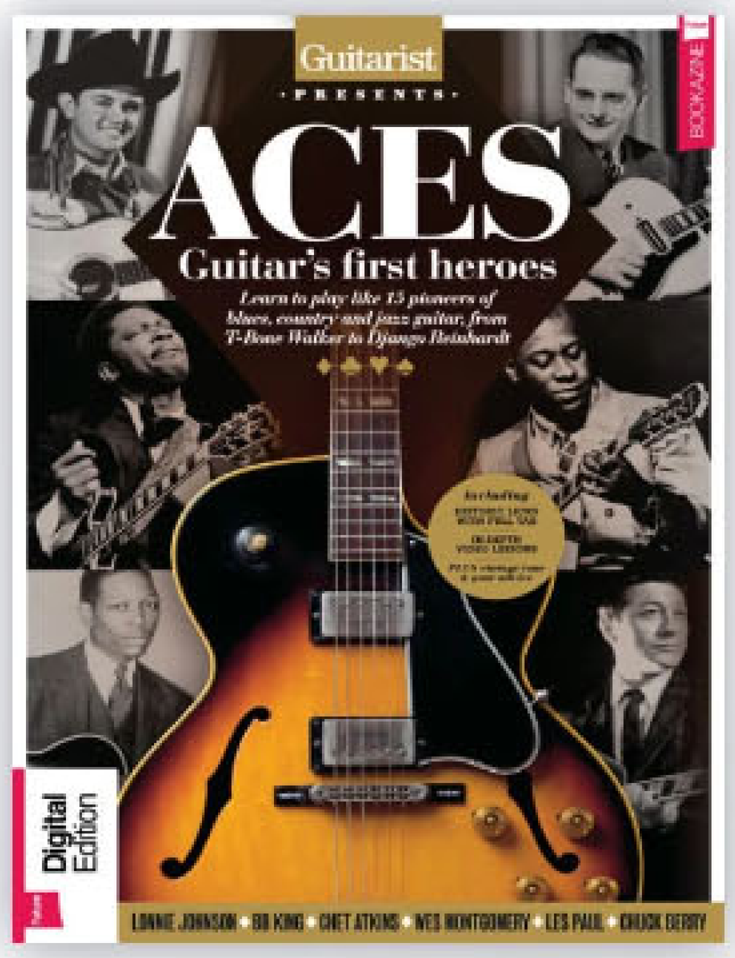
NEAT STORAGE

Store up to 13 issues of your magazine subscription in a coordinating slip case or ring binder.

Digital Camera
CA
COMPUTER music

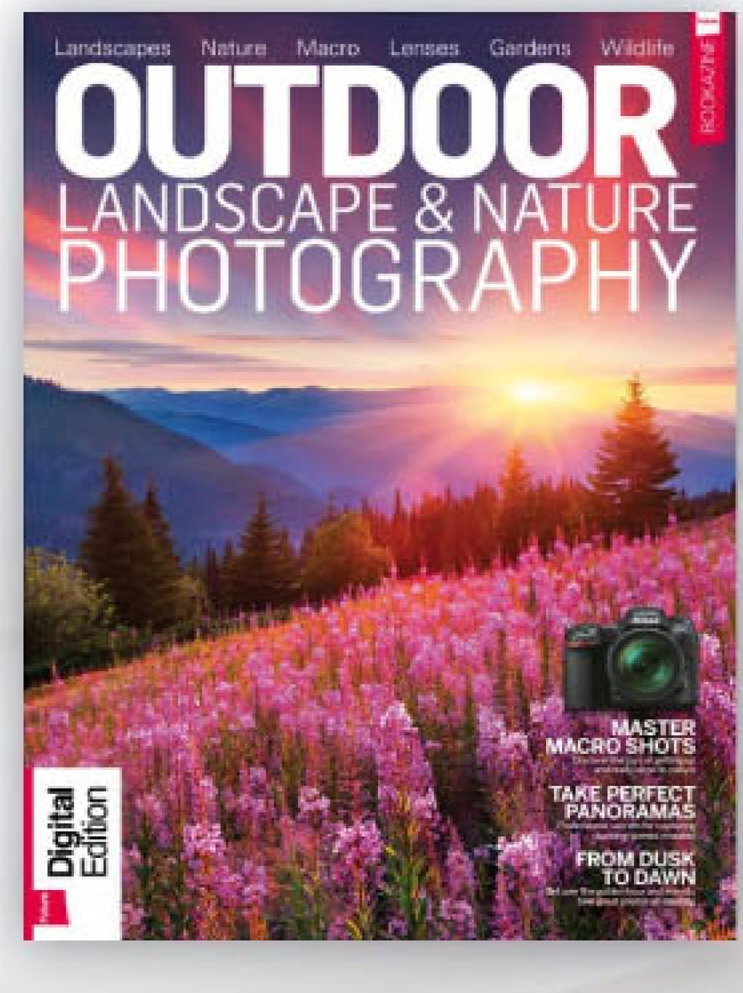
myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

BOW INTERNATIONAL
JOHN STUBBS

the 100 greatest videogames
EDGE

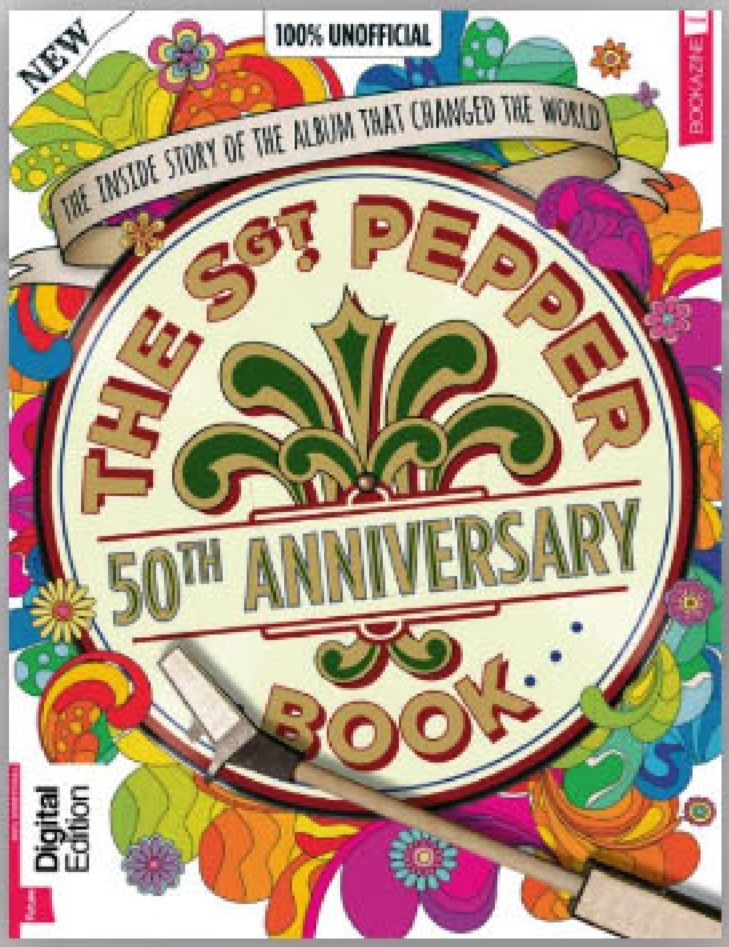
100 GREATEST TV SHOWS Of All Time
INSIDE GAME OF THRONES

Guitarist presents
ACES
Guitar's first heroes

DISCOVER MORE GREAT GUIDES & SPECIALS

From photography to music and technology to field sports, there's something for everyone.


OUTDOOR LANDSCAPE & NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

What if... Alternative History

Amazon Echo
The Complete Manual

THE SGT PEPPER 50TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK

Our magazines and binders make perfect gifts too. And don't worry if you're not quite sure which titles they'll enjoy the most because we have a great choice of gift vouchers available to buy.

✓ No hidden costs · Shipping included in all prices · We deliver to over 100 countries · Secure online payment

FUTURE myfavouritemagazines
Official Magazine Subscription Store

myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

45 CROCHET Patterns
100 GAMES TO PLAY BEFORE YOU DIE
100 GREATEST SCI-FI CHARACTERS
CHURCHILL
GREEK MYTHOLOGY
AC/DC
AIRGUN ACCURACY
THE WINDSORS
THE BLUES COLLECTION
The Ultimate 70s Collection

Discover another of our great bookazines

From science and history to technology and crafts, there are dozens of Future bookazines to suit all tastes

Fitbit The Complete Manual
HOW IT WORKS BOOK OF AMAZING VEHICLES
iPhone X Tips, Tricks & Apps
LINUX MADE SIMPLE
Paint & Draw COLLECTION
Teach yourself Wildlife PHOTOGRAPHY
Photoshop for Beginners
ImagineFX SKETCHBOOKS
The Windows 10 Handbook
100 GREAT GUITARS

✓ Get great savings when you buy direct from us

✓ 1000s of great titles, many not available anywhere else

✓ World-wide delivery and super-safe ordering

FUTURE

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

Magazines, back issues & bookazines.

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

BOOK OF THE WILD WEST

FROM THE ALAMO TO LITTLE BIGHORN

THE LEGENDS THAT DEFINED THE AMERICAN OLD WEST

DISCOVERING THE AMERICAN WEST

They ventured across the country through unknown terrain, facing danger and discovery at every turn. This is the journey of Lewis and Clark

EXPLORING WILDERNESS

Trace the incredible quests to map uncharted territory

DAVY CROCKETT

Was Davy Crockett really the king of the wild frontier? Perhaps not, but he was certainly a legend in his own lifetime

HEROES OF THE FRONTIER

Delve into the true stories of America's legendary folk heroes

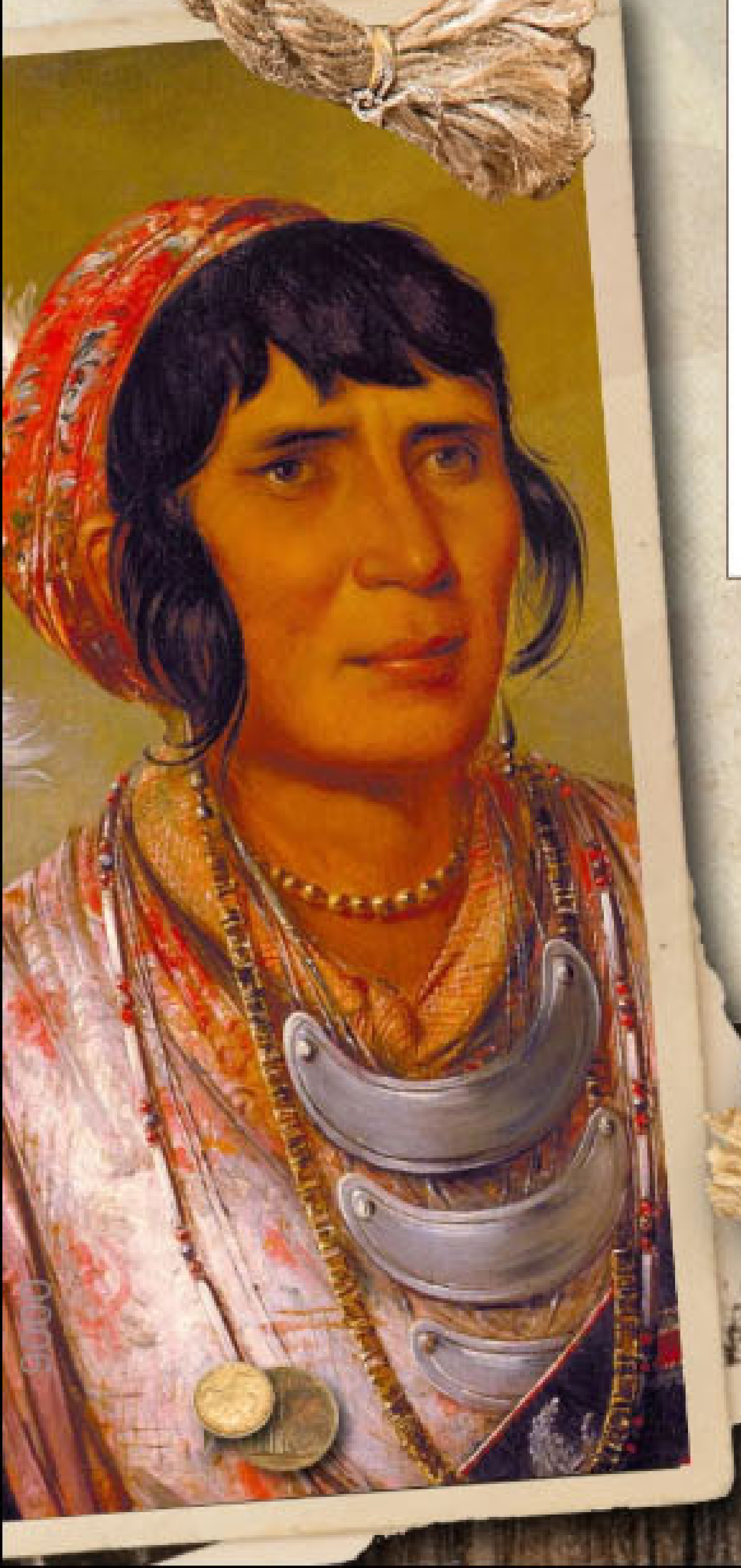
Mounted warriors rush forward
The winding river
Custer's last fight
War club wielded
Firing his colt
Taking a scalp

BATTLE O
LITTL
BIGHORN

MONTANA TERRITORY • 25-26 JUNE 1876

GREATEST BATTLES

Analyse the conflicts that helped shape a fledgling nation



THE HUNT FOR BILLY THE KID

It's the iconic Wild West story and thus, in the 150 years since its making, it has become fraught with embellishment and myth. What was the real history of the hunt that made the legendary lawman Pat Garrett?

NOTORIOUS OUTLAWS

Uncover the violent and dangerous lives of the Wild West's bandits

THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

When the director of the US Census Bureau announced the 'closing of the frontier' in 1890, the Wild West lost its wildness

CLOSING THE FRONTIER

Discover the lasting impact of the American Old West

BOOKAZINE